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Japanese media revives ailing taxi industry. **PAGE 5**

AMIM turns attention to Guam military buildup. **PAGE 6**

"We are not asking the federal government to take positive action to help the CNMI; we are merely asking that the federal government refrain from doing harm by allowing the unsustainable wage hikes to continue in view of our current economic challenges."

—Gov. Benigno R. Fitial

IN TESTIMONY BEFORE CONGRESSIONAL PANEL

Fitial: Suspend wage hikes

By AGNES E. DONATO
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REPORTER

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial was expected to ask Congress to halt further increases to the CNMI minimum wage at a congressional hearing Thursday morning in Washington D.C.

In his testimony before the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, an

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RELATED NEWS

'Cap minimum wage at $4.05 for 2 years'

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Chamber bats for 'measured' wage hikes

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce is not opposed to a salary hike for the islands lowest-income employees *per se*—as long as it is reasonable and could be sustained by the local economy.

This, in a nutshell, was the testimony that the Chamber intended to present during the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Re-

See CHAMBER on Page 4

KITE-MAKING WORKSHOP JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Korea Kitefliers Association director Hakwon Kim teaches parents and students on the proper way of making a kite during a one-hour-and-a-half session on kite-making at the Brilliant Star School on Navy Hill yesterday. The free workshop will continue today from 4pm to 5:30pm.

Petition seeks acting Fire chief's ouster

BY FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Assistant Fire chief Juan Wabol's recent appointment as acting Fire Division chief has been met with an online petition seeking his removal.

In a memorandum dated Feb. 15, 2008, Department of Public Safety Commissioner Rebecca Warfield informed DPS personnel that Wabol is now the acting chief of the Fire Division effective immediately.

The commissioner said she believes that everyone in the Fire Division will support Wabol's appointment.

That doesn't seem to be the case, with an online petition started yesterday asking Warfield, lawmakers, and Gov. Benigno R. Fitial to remove Wabol as the Fire Division's leader.

The petition claimed that Wabol is "incapable and incompetent."

"Chief Wabol has previously been charged with the leadership of the Fire Division. It languished. There was virtually no accom-

See PETITION on Page 4

Panel recommends all kids get flu shots

ATLANTA (AP)—All children—not just those under 5—should get vaccinated against the flu, a federal advisory panel said Wednesday. The panel voted to expand annual flu shots to virtually all children except infants younger than 6 months and those with serious egg allergies.

That means about 30 mil-

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OPINION METER

This week's poll:

Do you support the continued operation of public radio station KRNM in the CNMI?

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INSIDE

GTA Donation

GTA TeleGuam donated $5,000 to the American Cancer Society in support of the 2008 Relay For Life.

BUSINESS...Page 21

Plunder Charges

Two civic groups filed a complaint of plunder and corruption Wednesday against President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo.

ASIA...Page 24

Boa Eats Dog

A 16-foot python stalked a family dog for days before swallowing the pet whole in front of horrified children.

OFFBEAT...Page 26

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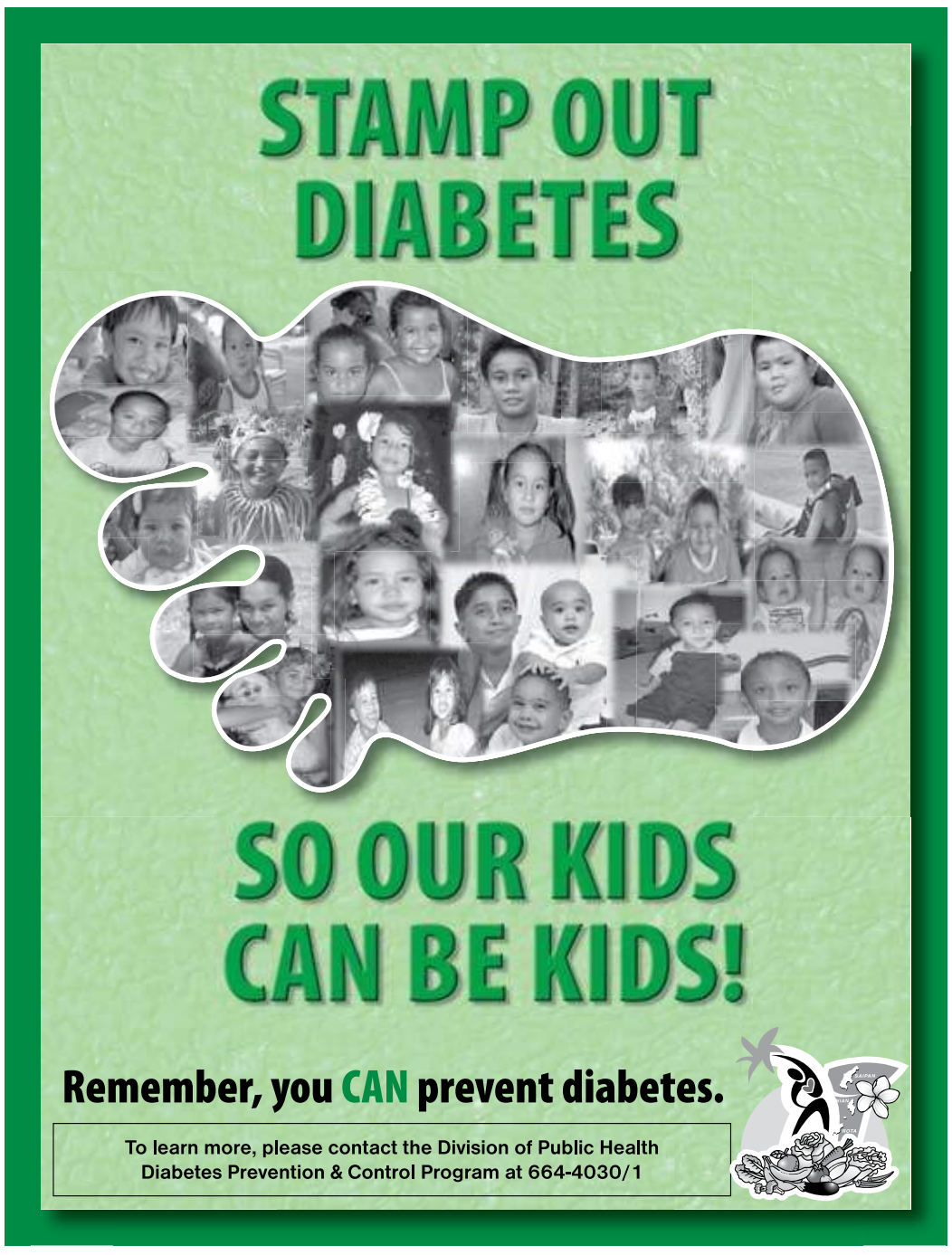
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Local

'Revoke lease on Tinian lot'

By AGNES E. DONATO
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REPORTER

Sen. Joseph M. Mendiola has urged the Department of Public Lands to revoke a company's lease of the Carolinas area on Tinian.

The senator said the public property was too valuable to be allowed to remain idle.

The former Marianas Public Lands Authority leased the public land to Micronesian Development Co. on May 1, 2003. At the time, the firm planned to construct a championship golf course, a major hotel, or a minimum of 20 retirement homes on the site.

The lease agreement stated that at least one of the three projects must be at least 60 percent complete within five years from the lease date.

To date, no construction of any of the major developments has happened. Mendiola said it is unlikely that any construction of the sort could be done within the next 60 days, or by May 1, 2008 when the five-year period expires.

Mendiola

"In these days when the CNMI and Tinian are suffering due to the bleak economic situation, and when there are so many residents waiting for their residential and agriculture homestead lots, the property being tied up by MDC could be put to better use than to just sit idly and not producing any income for the CNMI or the municipality," said Mendiola, chairman of the Tinian Legislative Delegation.

He added that the property could be used for other commercial developments, for possible relocation sites for solid waste and wastewater centers, for relocation of ranchers and farmers who may be displaced by the U.S. military buildup in the region, and for homestead programs for local residents.

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Employer's request to hire masseuse barred

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Labor Administrative Hearing Officer Jerry Cody has denied an employer's request to hire a masseuse after finding that the company has already been previously barred from hiring alien workers in the CNMI.

Cody affirmed the Labor director's decision that denied Three Nine Corp.'s work permit application to employ Bilan Yuan.

Cody, however, granted Yuan's request to let her to find a new employer within 30 days. He ordered Yuan to register with the Labor Division of Employment Services within seven days after Feb. 26, 2008.

"Based on the facts presented, the hearing officer finds that Yuan should be allowed another limited period in which to find a new employer," said the hearing officer in his order.

According to Labor records, Three Nine Corp. filed a permit transfer application on Feb. 19, 2007 to employ Juan as a masseuse. No conditional grant of transfer was issued with respect to the application.

On Sept. 13, 2007, Labor denied the application on the grounds that the employer had been permanently barred from hiring alien workers in an administrative order issued on July 30, 2007.

Three Nine Corp. and Yuan appealed.

In his administrative order issued on Tuesday, Cody said that, at the hearing it was confirmed that Three Nine Corp. was permanently barred from hiring or employing foreign national workers in the previous case.

"Based on the record, this hearing officer finds that the denial was justified," Cody said.

"Miss Yuan appealed the denial, not to contest it but simply in order to ask permission to transfer to a new employer," he said.

The denial, Cody said, was not the fault of the worker and Labor informed the Hearing Office that it does not object to transfer relief being given to this worker.

Man who stole two laptops gets 120 days

The Superior Court imposed yesterday a 120-day prison term on a man who stole two laptops from the Commonwealth Health Center.

Associate Judge Juan T. Lizama sentenced Hilario T. Angui to two years in prison, all suspended except for 120 days.

Following a plea agreement, Lizama gave the 24-year-old Angui credit for the time he had already served in jail since Nov. 10, 2007. The defendant is expected to complete his prison term on March 9, 2008.

Angui will be placed on two years probation. He was ordered to pay a $2,800 restitution, $200 fine, $25 court assessment fee plus a probation fee.

The judge required the defendant to perform 100 hours of community work and write a letter of apology to CHC.

The Attorney General's Office charged Angui with two counts of theft. He and assistant public defender Douglas Hartig entered a plea agreement with the government, represented by assistant attorney general Joe Taijeron.

The agreement stated that on Sept. 18, 2007, Angui stole two laptops from CHC. Police said the defendant stole a Dell Inspiron laptop and a Sony Vaio laptop.

A surveillance camera installed at CHC reportedly led to the identification and arrest of the defendant. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

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Registration set to start for NMI descents

By AGNES E. DONATO
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REPORTER

The Commonwealth Election Commission will begin registering voters of Northern Marianas descent in preparation for a future vote on the land alienation act.

Starting Monday, March 17, 2008, eligible people may register with the commission. To register, they must declare under oath that they are eligible to vote and that they satisfy the definition of a person of Northern Marianas descent.

A person is considered of Northern Marianas descent if he or she is a U.S. citizen or national and is of at least one-quarter CNMI Chamorro or Carolinian blood. An adopted child is also considered of Northern Marianas descent if he or she was adopted by a person of Northern Marianas descent while under 18 years old.

A full-blooded Northern Marianas Chamorro or Carolinian is someone who was born or domiciled in the Northern Marianas by 1950 and was a citizen of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands before the termination of the Trusteeship with respect to the Commonwealth.

Under the Constitution, only voters of Northern Marianas descent may cast votes on a proposed amendment to the land alienation act.

Article XII of the NMI Constitution restricts the acquisition of permanent and long-term interests in real property within the Commonwealth.

Section 805 of the Covenant requires the Commonwealth to maintain this land alienation provision for 25 years following the termination of the Trusteeship. This mandatory 25-year period will end in 2011. After that date, the Commonwealth may continue, alter or suspend Article XII.

However, the Constitution also allows non-indigenous people to lease public lands for a maximum of 40 years and private lands for 55 years.

There is a move in the Legislature to increase the permissible lease term for private lands to 75 years. The legislative initiative, sponsored by Rep. Heinz Hofschneider, proposes an April 19 special election on the constitutional amendment.

Registration for voters of Northern Marianas descent will take place at the Election Commission's office at 1313 Anatahan Drive, Capital Hill, Saipan.

Commissioner Joe Kiyoshi will facilitate registration on Tinian. Commissioner Miranda Manglona and Josepha Barcinas will handle registration on Rota.

The registration form is also available on the commission's website. Voters may complete the form and mail it back to the Election Commission at P. O. Box 500470, Saipan, MP, 96950-0470.

FITIAL

From Page 1

advance copy of which was provided to the media yesterday, Fitial says that continued federal minimum wage increases would compound the Commonwealth's economic problems.

He urges Congress to defer future federal wage hikes "until it is clear that our local economy can afford to sustain such increases with healthy economic growth."

The governor admits that the local government made a mistake in not raising the minimum wage before. But today the Commonwealth faces an entirely new economic situation.

"I appeal to you now, on behalf of the economic life of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and on behalf of the welfare of our population, not to further harm the CNMI by allowing federal wage hikes to continue unabated without regard to the dire economic consequences to our struggling island residents," Fitial says.

He adds, "The CNMI economy, in its present weakened state, and with all of the challenges we are currently facing, is in no condition to sustain further wage increases. The Federal Government should not force the CNMI to meet an economic standard it is wholly incapable of meeting under current circumstances. Our local economy cannot compete with a higher wage burden. We need wage costs our economy can afford to bear."

The governor also takes a swipe at the federal government, which he says failed to provide help to the Commonwealth when it was needed. He refers to the U.S. government's failure to pass a proposed change in trade law, which Fitial says could have saved Saipan's garment industry.

"This time we are not asking the federal government to take positive action to help the CNMI; we are merely asking that the federal government refrain from doing harm by allowing the unsustainable wage hikes to continue in view of our current economic challenges," he says.

"Our local economy has already been through the WTO change and the pull-out of Japan Airlines in 2005. We have made progress in weathering those difficulties, but if our local economy is to recover, we must have realistic and reasonable wage rates our small local market can bear," he says.

The U.S. Senate committee set the hearing to receive testimonies on the impact of the minimum wage increases on the economies of the Northern Marianas and American Samoa.

Both island governments controlled their wage rates until federal law was applied to them last year. The minimum wage rates applicable to American Samoa and the CNMI were increased 50 cents an hour on July 24 and July 25, 2007, respectively.

The rates will increase by 50 cents annually until they reach the federal minimum wage of $7.25 an hour.

Unless Congress amends the law, the next scheduled increase will be in effect on May 25, 2007.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial has his picture taken with U.S. Sen. Thomas Allard of Colorado. Fitial met with Allard on Wednesday (D.C. time) to discuss the CNMI's economically vulnerable situation in view of further federal minimum wage hikes for the islands. Fitial was also joined by Finance Secretary Eloy Inos, Saipan Chamber of Commerce president Jim Arenovski, and HANMI chair Lynn Knight.

PANEL

From Page 1

lion more children could be getting vaccinated. If heeded, it would be one of the largest expansions in flu vaccination coverage in U.S. history. The flu vaccine has been available since the 1940s.

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices said all children should start getting vaccinated as soon as possible, acknowledging that many doctors have already ordered their vaccine for the 2008-2009 season and may not be able to give the shots until 2009-2010. The flu season generally starts in the fall and continues through spring.

The panel's advice is routinely adopted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which issues vaccination guidelines to doctors and hospitals.

Flu shots were already recommended for those considered to be at highest risk of death or serious illness from the flu, including children ages 6 months to 5 years, adults 50 and older, and people with weakened immune systems.

The panel said that should be expanded to include children up to age 18.

Children ages 5 to 18 get flu at higher rates than other age groups, but they don't tend to get as sick. Of the 36,000 estimated annual deaths attributed to the flu, only 25 to 50 occur in children in that age bracket, CDC officials said.

But children who stay home sick from school cause parents to stay home, so reducing the illness in this group should cut down days of lost work, some experts said.

Experts believe giving flu shots to more children may also prevent the illness from spreading to adults and the elderly, although studies haven't clearly established that will happen.

Shots are not the only option. A nasal spray vaccine, FluMist, is approved for healthy people ages 2 to 49.

Panel members waffled a bit on whether to make the recommendations kick in immediately. Some public health professionals pushed them to make the clearest endorsement possible of the flu vaccine, concerned that the public is losing faith in flu shots because this year's vaccine was not well matched to circulating viruses.

Indeed, a few argued that the committee should recommend flu shots for every healthy person, rather than adding another set of children now and maybe young adults in a few years.

"Creeping incrementalism, I believe, continues to foster confusion" about who should get the shot and how important it is, said Dr. Gregory Poland, a Mayo Clinic infectious diseases expert.

The head of the panel, Dr. Dale Morse, asked for a report on universal vaccination of adults.

Meanwhile, vaccine makers said they expect to be able to produce enough doses next season to accommodate an extra 30 million children, but panel members had concerns about how the doses would be given to so many.

CHAMBER

From Page 1

sources' minimum wage hearing, held at 9:30am in Washington, D.C. (11:30 last night on Saipan).

"The Saipan Chamber of Commerce has, over at least the past decade, agreed that an increase in the minimum wage applicable to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands would be appropriate at a rate and to a degree that would not prove ruinous to the Commonwealth economy," the Chamber statement said.

The Chamber said that it has consistently called for the determination of this level by various means of careful study and analysis.

It added that the Chamber has repeatedly advocated a collective effort by federal and local officials, along with the private sector, to find a solution to the Commonwealth's economic challenges, which would include measured increases in the minimum wage in a manner that the CNMI economy could support.

"While the Chamber of Commerce has time and again called for a realistic minimum wage proposal that takes into consideration the state of the Commonwealth's economy—as opposed to the vastly more mature, geographically distant, and fundamentally different economy of the 50 states—the regular response has been to ignore the discordant nature of the island and mainland economies and to demand an accelerated and immutable increase in the Commonwealth's minimum wage," the Chamber statement said.

It said those who demand nothing less than the full implementation of the U.S. minimum wage in the Commonwealth do neither the islands nor the federal government any favors.

"To pretend that an island economy thousands of miles from the United States, with no remaining relatively large-scale industry other than tourism (which itself is substantially depressed), no military buildup subsidy, and fewer federal dollars flowing in (both historically and currently) than any other insular area, could sustain the same minimum wage required in other areas of the United States, is so unrealistic as to be disingenuous."

The Chamber said the increase of the Commonwealth's minimum wage to $7.25 per hour is roughly tantamount to imposing a minimum wage of $16.50 in the 50 states, as outlined in the U.S. Department of Labor's January 2008 report, "Impact of Increased Minimum Wages on the Economies of American Samoa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands."

The report also highlighted the lack of timely labor market data (the collection of which, elsewhere in the United States, is the responsibility of federal agencies such as the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Census Bureau), according to the Chamber.

"The report concludes that further minimum wage increases in the Commonwealth will likely lead to a worsening of the current economic decline as well as to a possible population decline," the Chamber said.

"The Saipan Chamber of Commerce—which has not and does not oppose reasonable and sustainable increases to the Commonwealth's minimum wage—requests that the U.S. Congress take immediate measures to halt the automatic minimum wage increases mandated by P.L. 110-28 and institute a system that relies on quantitative data and allows the flexibility necessary to implement increases in a manner that recognizes the unique nature of our island economy, the current economic depression we are experiencing, and our desire to not become the economic burden on the federal government that we surely would be should our isolated economy collapse," the Chamber said.

Chamber president James Arenovski is currently in D.C., together with Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands chair Lynn A. Knight, to attend the minimum wage hearing being conducted by the U.S. Senate committee.

PETITION

From Page 1

plishments and operational integrity was compromised because he failed to properly supervise and direct capable subordinates in the administration of the Fire Division," the petition said.

A firefighter who started the petition told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday that there is no doubt in his mind that most Fire Division personnel will sign the "no confidence petition."

The firefighter, who asked that he not be named, said the previous supervisor, Fire Division supervisor Fire Capt. Thomas Manglona, should be reinstated as the Fire Director.

The petitioner said the "recent development" between Wabol and Police Director Aniceto Ogumoro "is a public embarrassment to DPS and can only further erode the public's confidence in our ability to provide quality service."

Ogumoro recently filed a lawsuit against Wabol and other DPS officers over his [Ogumoro's] arrest in 2006 that was allegedly based on drummed-up charges and conspiracy.

Saipan Tribune tried to contact Wabol, but he was not available for comment.

Japanese media revives ailing taxi industry

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The arrival of more Japanese media on Saipan to cover the court proceedings of murder suspect Kazuyoshi Miura has revived the ailing taxicab industry on the island.

At Miura's first hearing on Monday, over 50 Japanese journalists and their crew arrived on the island. That number doubled during Wednesday's hearing after Japanese journalists based in Manila and Hong Kong arrived to join the coverage.

At least two TV stations even sent some 20 journalists, cameramen and technical crews each as the coverage competition intensified.

All these have resulted in a minor boom for local taxicabs. Taxi drivers who used to complain for lack of passengers are now smiling.

A taxicab driver told Saipan Tribune yesterday that they are very happy since the arrival of the Japanese media because not only they are very nice but they also pay good money.

The driver, who requested anonymity, said he is earning $300 to $450 a day because he has one regular journalist customer. Before the arrival of the Japanese media, he said he earned only $200 to $400 in 15 days.

The driver said he has been driving a taxicab since 1995 and this it is the first time that he has seen taxi drivers become busy.

He said they do not spend so much on gas because most of the time the journalists just hang around in the Judicial Complex and in front of the Department of Corrections.

"I hope that they will stay here longer," he added.

Another taxi driver said he agreed to $150 a day for three reporters who belong to one newspaper.

"I am very happy with that already. They are very nice people and we don't go much around. Most of the time we're only sitting here," said the driver, who was standing behind a tree in front of the Judicial Complex in Susupe.

The driver said he used to earn $30 a day; in really bad times, only 10 a day.

Makiko Saito, a writer for AERA Magazine, said she pays $250 per day for taxi and $180 a day for a room at the Hyatt Regency.

Saito said she also went shopping because the company immediately sent her to Saipan and that she had no time to pack up h.

Saito has three other co-staff who are also covering the Miura hearing.

Even the Superior Court has benefited from the huge number of journalists by selling them tapes of the court proceedings.

The court charges $7.50 for three tapes. The court is also charging $.75 cents per document for copying.

"For the tapes alone, maybe we sold about $200 in one day," a court staff said. "It's good because they contribute to the revenue."

PTI: IT&E purchase an investment in the region

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

CNMI-based Pacific Telecom Inc.'s acquisition of Guam telecommunications firm IT&E last Wednesday is not by any means a no-confidence vote on the Commonwealth's economy.

According to PTI president and CEO Jose Ricardo "Ricky" Delgado, "this investment is part of our strategy to invest in all of Micronesia and Guam is part of it. Just like GuamCell and SaipanCell are one company and KMCV Guam and KMCV CNMI are one company… people are demanding this."

"Definitely it's not a vote of no confidence on the CNMI economy," he added, speaking in a telephone interview with the *Saipan Tribune*.

Delgado said the acquisition of the IT&E brand and the company's cellular, long distance, Internet, and business phone and data solutions in Guam will have a positive effect in the consumer base of the CNMI.

One possible benefit is the elimination of roaming charges between Guam and the CNMI as well as the advent of a single network for texting on both islands.

"Nobody's saying that we stopped investing in the CNMI. Our recent investment in GSM technology, which many people in the CNMI really love, is proof of that and so is our soft launching of push-to-talk. Another surprise is also coming up," added Delgado.

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial applauded PTI Pacific Inc.'s acquisition of IT&E and said he expects the transaction will be a boon to both islands.

"The governor thinks it is gratifying to have a CNMI-based company buy out a Guam-based company instead of the other way around, because people might normally expect Guam companies to buy out CNMI companies considering Guam's larger size. In any case, we welcome all healthy business activities between the islands because such activities or transactions tend to benefit both islands," said Fitial's press secretary Charles P. Reyes.

"We want to see Guam prosper and we also want to see the CNMI prosper, so it's not a matter of interisland rivalry at all. Commerce and economics create many win-win situations. It is not a zero sum game. We want to see our entire region prosper and flourish, especially with the anticipated military buildup in our region. We expect both Guam and the CNMI to benefit. We like to see healthy competition between companies in Guam and the CNMI, and we congratulate PTI on its most recent acquisition. The healthy competition and PTI's recent moves should benefit our consumers and serve our business and market needs very well. It's all good," added Reyes.

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AMIM turns attention to Guam military buildup

By RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN
rianne_pangelinan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Association of Marianas Islands Mayors, Vice Mayors and Municipal Council members held the first session of its 15th general assembly yesterday at the Seaside Hall of the Saipan Grand Hotel.

The AMIM meets annually to share resources and ideas and discuss issues pertaining to their islands.

Barrigada Mayor Jessie Palican, who is the 2007 AMIM vice president, said the group will also talk about the socio-economic impacts that the islands are facing right now.

The main topic in yesterday's general assembly was to form a discussion on the impending military buildup in the Pacific region. However, the guest speakers were not able to make it to yesterday's gathering.

The AMIM officers had also invited other guest speakers who are "subject matter experts" in the area of labor and the development of a skilled labor force to meet the demands of the military buildup.

Dr. Bert Johnston, education director for the Guam Contractors Association Trades Academy, conducted a presentation on the goals and objectives of the academy, as well as the programs being implemented to build a skilled labor force.

Johnston shared what the Trades Academy has done in the past 16 months in Guam and how it is possible to replicate the same thing here in the CNMI.

"The Trades Academy is a non-profit, non-government trading organization. And what it does is get local people to teach other local people in the construction trades, " Johnston explained.

First of all, students need to be interested in construction and be willing to learn. "If they don't have either one of those two, then this may not be the program for them," he said.

Since being established in Guam, the Trades Academy has had 170 classes and has taught over 220 students in the past 16 months, according Johnston.

"Every single one of them [students] is working. The Trades Academy guarantees employment, " he said.

Johnston added that there are "so many construction workers, so why not use them to teach the class."

Palican said the highlight of yesterday's general assembly was to find ways to accomplish the goal of ensuring that people in the community who want to better themselves get certified.

"The opportunities for all residents that want to work and better themselves are available through the Trades Academy," said Palican.

The group also presented Tan Holdings Corp. president Jerry Tan with a plaque, recognizing and congratulating Tan Holding's for its 35 years of successful business, unselfish contributions, and support for the people of the CNMI and Guam.

Tan accepted the recognition and expressed his appreciation. "I'd like to thank the island of Guam and all of our allies in the CNMI. It's always a good thing to give something back to the community, and we'll continue doing that," said Tan.

Today, AMIM is scheduled to conduct its annual election of officers. Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council chairwoman Antonia M. Tudela will also step down as AMIM president.

Each year, officials from the CNMI and Guam take turns in heading the organization.

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'Cap minimum wage at $4.05 for 2 years'

By AGNES E. DONATO
agnes_donato@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Washington Rep. Pete A. Tenorio is skeptical that the U.S. Congress can pass a law to stop the next increase to the minimum wage by May 25.

As a compromise, he suggests that Congress pass a law capping the minimum wage in the CNMI at $4.05 an hour, the wage expected after the implementation of the second increase, and allow it to remain in effect for two years.

Tenorio, in the testimony he prepared for the U.S. Senate hearing in Thursday evening, says this will provide workers with a total increase of a dollar an hour, "which is a significant step toward a livable wage."

Tenorio

He expresses hope that the two-year break would provide time for needed data to be collected on the impact of the implemented and future wage hikes.

He adds that the two-year period would provide local businesses time to adjust their operations to the higher wage rates.

"Mr. Chairman, I have weighed my position on a second increase very carefully. Whatever decision is made will have a potentially devastating effect on one sector or another in the CNMI. However, as a pragmatist and a realist, and with all due respect, I simply do not believe that it is possible to enact legislation by May 24th to delay the second increase," Tenorio says.

Tenorio's position differs from that of the Fitial administration and the business sector, both of which oppose any further increases to the current wage floor of $3.55 an hour.

"Sentiment in the Commonwealth regarding the second minimum wage increase, scheduled for May 25, and future minimum wage increases is not as homogeneous as the Committee might be led to believe," says the Commonwealth's representative to the nation's capital.

He reports that over the last few weeks, his office has been barraged by calls from CNMI residents. Members of the private sector have asked him to oppose the wage hike over concerns about the business closures, job loss, and the loss of government revenue. But there are also community activists, students, and parents, as well as some businessmen and a few legislators who believe that the second increase is needed to raise the standard of living in the CNMI.

Local writer to conduct book signing

Local writer Richard Carl Bright, who penned the absorbing World War II saga *Pain and Purpose in the Pacific: True Reports of WWII*, will be having a book signing at the American Memorial Park's Visitors' Center on March 8, 2008, Saturday, from 5pm to 7pm.

As a former Continental Airlines pilot based in Guam and now retired and currently living on Saipan, Bright had the opportunity over a five-year period to visit other islands that were the scene of horrific battles of World War II.

Bright turned that five-year experience into a book retracing the travel of his uncle, Carl J. Johnson, who spent 30 months in the Pacific during World War II. Four of those months Johnson spent on the islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Okinawa in grueling combat.

To write the book, Bright interviewed American veterans and island indigenous from Pearl Harbor, Saipan, Guam, Tinian, Peleliu, Palau, Iwo Jima, the Philippines and Okinawa about their experiences during the war and how it played out in the Pacific. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

Free kite-making workshop

Two champion kite flyers from South Korea will be conducting a free kite-making workshop today under the auspices of the Brilliant Star School of Saipan.

Korea Kitefliers Association president Kitai Rhee and director Hakwon Kim will conduct the workshop from 4pm to 5:30pm at the Brilliant Star School on Navy Hill.

The workshop is FREE! All you have to do is attend and learn how to make a kite with your family and friends. If you do not have any materials to use for the workshop, there will be Kite Kits for sale at reasonable prices.

The workshop is open to the public. ***(PR)***

ANNOUNCEMENT
The overwhelming demand for our shrimp during the Holiday Season and the weeks that followed has depleted our stocks of marketable size shrimps. We regret to inform you that we will stop selling shrimp at our farm and at the Sabalu market for the next 3 weeks to give time for our shrimp to grow. Our expansion is now underway that will triple our current production by the 3rd quarter of this year.
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~~CR-V LX~~	~~#7C07359~~ SOLD	~~White~~	~~$22,995.00~~
Ridgeline	#7H505732	Silver	$32,990.00

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Fusion	#7R127180	Pearl	$18,990.00
~~Escape~~	~~#7KB4588~~ SOLD	~~Silver~~	~~$19,990.00~~
F-150	#6NB05745	White	$21,990.00
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KIA	STOCK #	COLOR	PRICE
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Free medical care for US veterans

Military veterans in the CNMI who have served in combat since Nov. 11, 1998, including veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan, are now eligible for five years of free medical care for most conditions at any Veterans Affairs hospital.

This measure increases a two-year limit that has been in effect for nearly a decade.

"By their service and their sacrifice, America's newest combat veterans have earned this special eligibility period for VA's world class health care," said Veterans Affairs Secretary Dr. James B. Peake.

Coleman

Ruth Coleman, executive director of the Military and Veterans Affairs Office, said the five-year deadline has no effect upon veterans with medical conditions related to their military service.

"Veterans may apply at any time after their discharge from the military, even decades later, for medical care for service-connected health problems," she said.

The new provision, part of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2008 signed by President Bush on Jan. 28, 2008, applies to care in a VA hospital, outpatient clinic or nursing home.

The provision also extends to 180 days the dental benefits, which was previously limited to 90 days after discharge for most veterans.

Coleman said combat veterans who never took advantage of the VA's health care system and who were discharged between Nov 11, 1998 and Jan. 16, 2003 have until Jan 27, 2011 to qualify for free VA health care.

"The five-year window is also open to activated reservists and members of the National Guard, if they served in a theater of combat operations after Nov. 11, 1998 and were discharged under other than dishonorable conditions," said Coleman.

She added that veterans who take advantage of the five-year VA health care can continue to receive care after five years, although they may have to pay co-payments for medical problems unrelated to their military service.

Copayments range from $8 for a 30-day supply of prescription medicine to $1,024 for the first 90 days of inpatient care each year.

CNMI veterans may call Coleman at 664-2650 for further questions or information. ***(Rianne Pangelinan-Brown)***

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Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

February 29, 2000

Political meddling in CUC could harm other CIP projects

Commonwealth Utilities Corp. Executive Director Timothy P. Villagomez yesterday warned that political interference in the management of the community utility could result in the withholding of all Capital Improvement Projects in CNMI by the Department of the Interior. The embattled executive director's statement came amid a twin move by the Senate and the House of Representatives to restore the mothballed 80 MW power project, which CUC downgraded to 60 MW.

Compact Impact aggravates CNMI's deficit problem

Failure by the U.S. government to reimburse the expenses incurred by the CNMI in hosting citizens of the Freely Associated States under the Compact of Free Association is putting more pressure on the Commonwealth's budget deficit problems. In a letter to the U.S. General Accounting Office, Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio said people from the Compact countries—Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Palau and Marshall Islands—further dent the government's dwindling resources.

Micronesian islands pitch on ecotourism

ROTA—At least 100 tourism leaders from the Northern Marianas and neighboring islands in Micronesia gathered here yesterday for a five-day symposium aimed at developing the region's potential for ecotourism. Government tourism officials and industry players all over Micronesia have been on the lookout for other areas that will help revive the region's travel industry, which has been on a steady decline since major Asian currencies weakened against the U.S. dollar in mid-1997.

Gov't, BOG sign $30M interim financing for CIP

Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio has signed an agreement with the Bank of Guam in connection with the $30 million loan for the implementation of capital improvement projects which have been delayed due to lack of matching funds. Interest rate on the loan was pegged at prevailing market rates. The signing of the loan agreement on Feb. 18, 2000 was witnessed by Finance Secretary Lucy Nielsen. The $30 million loan will be repaid from proceeds of the planned $60 million bond float in June. The Commonwealth Development Authority CDA has chosen Paine Webber to underwrite the tax-exempt municipal bond.

Legislature steps into Outer Cove Marina controversy

A joint public hearing of the House of Representatives and the Senate may be conducted soon to finally settle the controversy surrounding the construction and use of the Outer Cove Marina. Senate Floor Leader Pete Reyes said legislators should also begin exploring the possibility of transferring the management and ownership of the Outer Cove Marina to the government.

The Department of Lands and Natural Resources held a meeting last Oct. 25 with boat owners in a move to hammer out an acceptable departure passenger fee.

February 29, 2004

Admin: Gateway project still a go

Acting Gov. Diego T. Benavente reaffirmed the administration's commitment to support the Pacific Gateway Project, even as its author, Northern Marianas College President Kenneth Wright, has decided to step down. Commenting on Wright's resignation, Benavente said, "It's very unfortunate." Aware of some talks criticizing the project as "too big a step" amid the college's lack of funds, the administration official maintained that Pacific Gateway is a project that the public college needs.

CNMI renews its push for delegate seat

The House Resources Committee heard testimony Thursday on a longstanding issue for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands-the creation of a non-voting delegate's position to represent the CNMI's interests in Congress. Unlike Guam and other territories with non-voting delegates, the CNMI currently has a "resident representative" in the nation's capital-Pete A. Tenorio-with no authority to work in Congress at any level. The resident representative serves as more of a lobbyist, writing letters and talking to policymakers, said Tenorio.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

PAWS Kids' Night Out tonight

For parents, enjoy some special time to yourselves! For kids, join in the fun, food, and friends. The PAWS Kids' Night out will be held today, Friday, Feb. 29, 6pm – 10pm, at the Whimsy Room of the Saipan Grand Hotel. The cost is $10 for the first child, and $5 for each additional sibling, ages 3-12.

Check in is at 6pm – 6:30pm (No drop offs after 6:30). Pick up is by 10pm but early pickups are welcome.

Register via phone at 285-PAWS (285-7297) or via email at melissasimms56@hotmail.com. This event is sponsored by the Saipan Grand Hotel. ***(PAWS)***

DEQ Brigade sets cleanup tomorrow

The Division of Environmental Quality cleanup brigade will be picking up trash from Laly 4 Beach on Saturday, March 1, 2008 at 8am.

If you would like to volunteer your time to clean and beautify our island, meet the brigade at Laly 4 Beach, also known as San Isidro Beach Park in Chalan Kanoa.

Volunteers will start the cleanup at the beach park and head south to Hopwood Jr. High School and clean until 10am and break for drinks and then if continues, if needed.

This month, outstanding brigade volunteers who participated in at least 10 monthly cleanups will receive a brigade cap and those who participated in at least three cleanups will receive a green brigade t-shirt.

The DEQ cleanup brigade began in 1996 and continues to maintain clean, healthy beaches. For more information about volunteering, contact the DEQ office at 664-8500. ***(DEQ)***

Developmental disabilities awareness month

The Tinian Disability Coalition announces the upcoming Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month activities starting with a Thanksgiving Mass on March 1, 2008 at 6pm at the San Jose Church. The event will continue with workshops on March 5-6, 2008 at Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino. The activities will end on Saturday, March 8 with a Buddy Walk and picnic afterwards at Tachogna Beach. All families and friends are encouraged to participate. These events are sponsored by the CNMI Developmental Disabilities Council, CNMI Cancer Association and First Lady's Vision. Call CNMI DD Council at 664-7000 or Community Outreach Program at 433-2683. ***(PR)***

Tinian community marks "Read Across America"

On March 3, 2008, the children of Tinian, in conjunction with National Education Association, will be celebrating the annual event called "Read Across America," a national literacy movement dedicated to reaching out to all readers of ages and cultures.

To kick off the year-long reading program, each school-aged child will receive 4-6 books. These books were donated by First Book except for the shipping costs (have to be borne by the applicant), Youth Coalition. The books were distributed throughout the schools on Tinian with the help of parent and community volunteers. The culminating event for the first month will be on April 12, 2008.

If you have a child that has not received any books or if you want to volunteer, contact Ofemia Khan or Maria H. Aguon at Northern Marianas College at 433-0658 or Frances H. Diaz at 433-3800 or email: diazfrancesh@hotmail.com. The books will be packed and delivered to your home. ***(PR)***

Fishery council sets meeting

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee will convene 9am to 5pm on March 3, 2008, and 8:30am to 5pm on March 4 to 6, 2008, at the Council office, 1164 Bishop St., Suite 1400, Honolulu.

The SSC will discuss and may make recommendations to the Council regarding management of non-longline pelagic fisheries, Hawaii bottomfish fishery and longline fishery for swordfish, Mariana archipelago longline and purse-seine closed areas, and American Samoa longline program modification and purse-seine closed area.

The Council is the policy-making agency for fisheries management in federal waters (generally, 3 to 200 miles offshore) of the U.S. Pacific Islands. For more information and agenda, go to www.wpcouncil.org, ph. (808) 522-8220 or email info.wpcouncil@noaa.gov. ***(PR)***

Fit for Life walking event reset

The Health Planning Committee for the Joeten Charitable Foundation: Families Fit For Life Walk issued a statement about the postponement of the walk schedule for Saturday, March 1, 2008 at 5pm. The committee will be issuing a new schedule for the walking event within a few weeks. As a reminder, this will be strictly a walking event only. ***(PR)***

Zoning Board solicits suggested changes to zoning law

The Zoning Board said that it will soon be evaluating suggestions for changes to the Saipan Zoning Law of 2007. A draft package of proposed changes will be circulated for public review, revised, and then forwarded to the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation for their consideration.

The public can help the Board by sending recommendations for changing the Zoning Law text or maps (rezones) by March 14. Submit recommendations to staff@zoning.gov.mp, or mail or deliver them to the Zoning Office.

Copies of the law are available at the zoning website (www.zoning.gov.mp) or can be viewed or purchased from the Zoning Office, 2nd floor, Joeten Building, DanDan. The Zoning Office will be pleased to answer any questions about the law. ***(PR)***

Parenting, childhood disorders seminar

The CNMI Council on Developmental Disabilities will be celebrating March as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. This year's theme is "SUCCESS-When Doors Open- We succeed!"

On Monday, March 3, 2008, CGC psychiatrist Dr. Willie Gutowski will conduct a presentation on Normal Parenting Issue and Common Childhood Disorders. All parents and teachers are encouraged to take this opportunity to attend this presentation.

To register, call the Council office at 664-7000/7001/7003/7005/7041 or fax registration form to 664-7030. ***(PR)***

Mificpa tax seminar on March 1

The Marianas Institute of Filipino CPAs and Accountants has invited David Burger to conduct a tax seminar on March 1, 2008, Saturday, from 8am to 12pm, at the Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe. Burger is the chairman of CNMI Board of Accountancy.

The topics will include an overview of the preparation of Form 1040CM-Individual Income Tax Return and Form 1120CM-Corporate Income Tax Return. Also, recent updates and developments prescribed by the CNMI Revenue & Taxation as well as the United States Internal Revenue Code on Corporate Taxation will be discussed.

All accountants, members and non-members are encouraged to attend this current and informative seminar. The managers and other professional individuals who seek to get more information with these tax returns are also welcome.

A seminar fee of $10 for members and $12 for non-members is required. Proceeds will go to selected charitable/civic organization.

For registration, call Irene at 287-7997, Lois at 235-9322 or Jho at 285-2812. ***(Mificpa)***

Council cautions mowers, bush cutters

The 10th Saipan & Northern Islands Municipal Council gave notice to the public, especially the operators of tractor mower, brush cutting machinery and mechanized chain saw whose work is performed under the auspices of the CNMI or local government agencies, including private contractors operating along the major highways and secondary roadways, including walkways of pathways, to always exercise due diligence in taking every necessary precautionary safety measure against causing serious injuries to people and properties passing by or in close proximity to the affected public premises or private work sites. ***(PR)***

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
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EDITORIAL

The problem with biofuels

As the United States searches for alternative ways to feed its addiction to petroleum, ethanol and other biofuels derived from organic material have been considered a miracle motor vehicle elixir. The energy bill signed by President Bush in December mandates that at least 36 billion gallons of biofuels a year be used by 2020. Yet separate studies released this month by Princeton University and the Nature Conservancy reveal that biofuels are not a silver bullet in the battle against global warming. In fact, they could make things worse.

Corn and sugar cane are common sources of ethanol. Aside from emitting fewer greenhouse gases than coal or oil when burned as fuel, these biofuel crops remove carbon from the atmosphere while they are growing—thus making them nearly carbon-neutral. But the studies show that ethanol may be even more dangerous for the environment than fossil fuels are. As the Princeton study points out, clearing previously untouched land to grow biofuel crops releases long-sequestered carbon into the atmosphere. While planting corn and sugar cane in already tilled land is fine, a problem arises when farmers churn up new land to grow more fuel or the food and feed displaced by biofuel crops.

The impact of these land-use changes is enormous. As the study from the Nature Conservancy warns, "converting rainforests, peatlands, savannas, or grasslands to produce biofuels in Brazil, Southeast Asia and the United States creates a `biofuel carbon debt' by releasing 17 to 420 times more carbon dioxide than the fossil fuels they replace." There are other negative effects. Massive amounts of water are needed to irrigate cornfields, setting up potential competition between farms and homes. The runoff of pesticides and nitrogen-based fertilizers used by farmers could lead to increased pollution and oxygen-depleted waterways. The natural gas used to make the fertilizer adds to the carbon deficit created by biofuels.

An essay in the May-June 2007 issue of Foreign Affairs by two professors from the University of Minnesota highlighted still another problem: The biofuels craze could starve people. "By putting pressure on global supplies of edible crops, the surge in ethanol production will translate into higher prices for both processed and staple foods around the world," they wrote. "If oil prices remain high—which is likely—the people most vulnerable to the price hikes brought on by the biofuel boom will be those in countries that both suffer food deficits and import petroleum."

The problems with corn-based ethanol, long regarded as a transitional fuel source, have been debated for years. One alternative is to squeeze ethanol out of cellulose from switch grass, cornhusks and other biomass sources. But because cellulosic ethanol remains experimental, it might be years before it makes it from the laboratory to the gas tank. It all adds up to another example that there is no quick, cheap and easy way to confront the menace of global warming.

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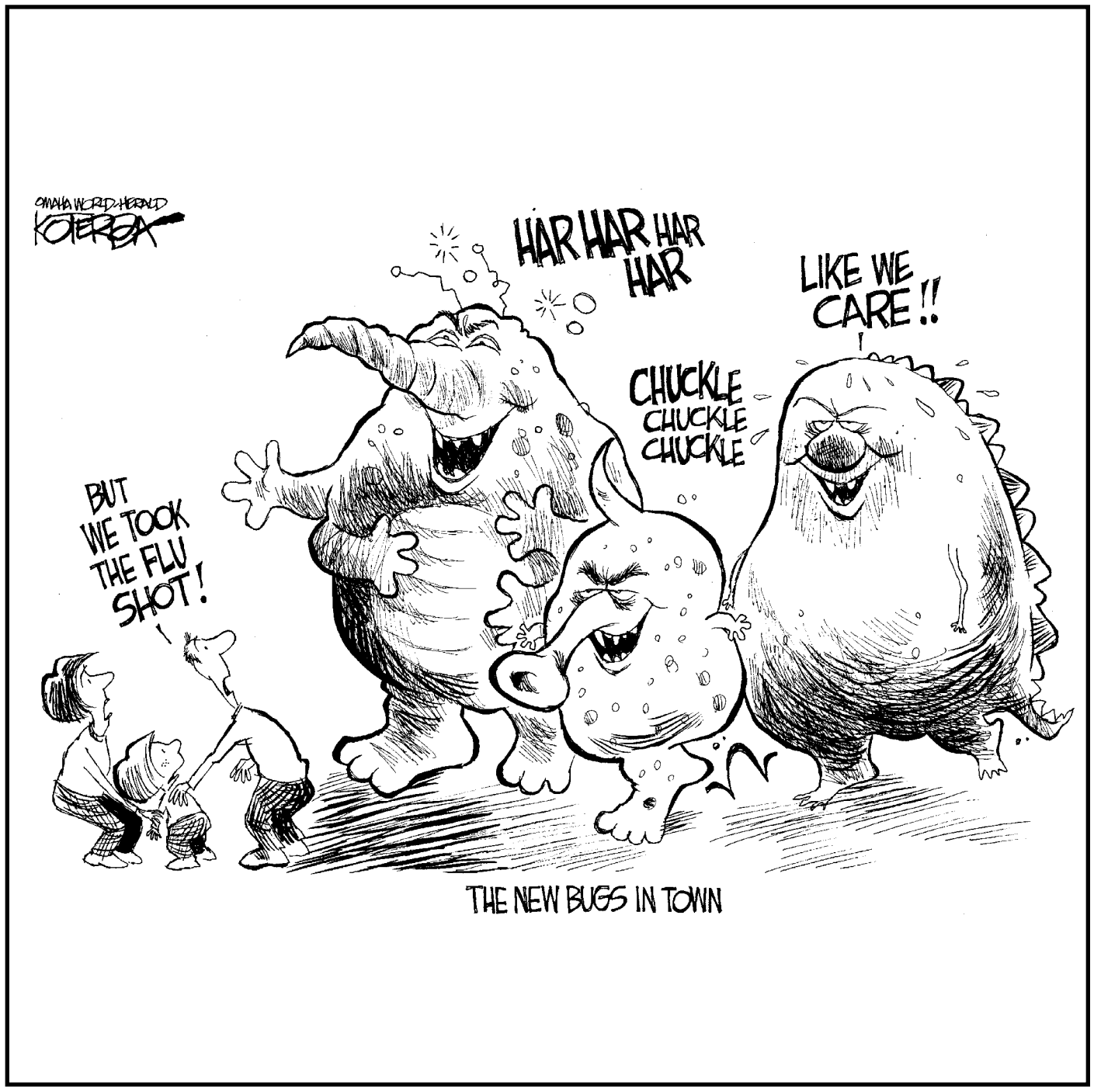


In remembrance

By EDWARD PANGELINAN
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Editor's Note: The following is the text of the eulogy delivered by the author, who is a cousin and good friend of John "JP" DLG Pangelinan, at funeral held Feb. 16, 2008, at the American Martyrs' Catholic Church in Manhattan Beach, California.

Good morning and Hafa Adai.

"Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."

How profound and true are these words of our Lord in our gathering this morning. For indeed we do mourn the passing of a dear and wonderful person: the father, brother, and dear friend to us all. As we lament, bid farewell, and offer our prayers for the departed soul of John "Manuel" Deleon Guerrero Pangelinan (JP), we take great comfort and joy in remembering the wonderful life that he shared with us during the course of his nearly 71 years in this world.

John had touched the life of each one of us. To you his loving children, he gave you life, his love and much more. To those of us his relatives and friends, he shared his friendship, kindness and generosity. We all remember him fondly as a wonderful, kindhearted, compassionate and cheerful man who always made time for families and friends. To his colleagues and employees, he is remembered as one who took care of his people, and was ever mindful of their well-being.

Each one of us has a very special remembrance of John. To me he was a wonderful cousin and served like an older brother and mentor that I never had as I was the eldest in my family. I remember the good times when we laughed over jokes and humorous events, as well as the sad and difficult times when we both shed tears over the passing of beloved members of our families and wonderful friends.

As we are gathered to celebrate John's new life and reminisce the wonderful compassion and love he endowed to each one of us, I want to share with you a legacy that he left behind for our benefit.

As John was born on Saipan in the Northern Mariana Islands, he inherited from his extended family the traditional and cultural values of the Chamorro/Carolinian people and the wisdom to survive in an island environment. He learned early in life that the Good Lord has endowed the Chamorro/Carolinian people with the same gift of intellectual power, creativity and genius as any other race. The Chamorro/Carolinian race is as gifted and talented as the Americans, Asians, Europeans, Arabs or any other nationality. And each one of us can accomplish and realize any goal, dream or aspiration by simply putting one's mind, heart and soul to the task. We can face any challenge, trials, tribulations and succeed. John firmly adhered to our tradition of the goodness of the human spirit. It's good to be compassionate and caring, and indeed, we have the responsibility to care for one's family, and to reach out to those of our neighbors who are in need of our help.

I was always impressed by his positive and uplifting attitude toward any individual. John greeted everyone with a smile on his face and treated every individual with respect and dignity as though that person was the most important personality in the world.

Fifty years ago, I went to Guam to pursue high school education as there was no high school on Saipan. John then was running the Guam Music Shop, and as a struggling, penniless, and rather malnourished student I would go to Guam Music Shop to see John for a weekend job. On every occasion, John greeted me with a warm welcome, a happy meal and lots of words of encouragement. He would remind me that as a Chamorro I was as smart, and perhaps better than any American student in Guam. I believed in him and to my surprise, I did excel in high school, received scholarship to college and law school, and returned home to Saipan to help our people achieve a permanent and enduring relationship with the United States of America and our people are now U.S. citizens.

John, we are gathered today in this hallowed church to bid you our fondest farewell. We thank you for sharing your life with us during your journey in this earth. You have left behind a legacy of luminous humanity to inspire us all and to tell us there are beautiful things in the world.

Adios Primo hastaki man aliehit talo gi tano Paraiso. I Sainata hu bendisi hit todos.

EDITORIAL POLICY The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, CIC Centre, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Saving your memories

By ED STEPHENS
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Ed's column runs every Friday. Visit Ed at SaipanBlog.com and TropicalEd.com.

The post-Christmas and Chinese New Year season is the perfect time to take my occasional look at data storage technology. After all, your photos and home videos from the holidays are probably digital, and if you don't back them up, you'll join the legions of hapless mooks who have fumbled away their precious memories.

If you ever see international news footage of panicked victims fleeing burning, or flooded, homes, they are often clutching just one possession: the family photo album. Since the CNMI has typhoon, earthquake, and even volcano risks, in addition to the daily worries of burglaries and other bummers, it's plain to see that your data, including your photos, is at risk. And that's just the dramatic stuff. In the more mundane realm, the heat and humidity of the Commonwealth will ruin anything eventually.

That's the bad news. The good news is that the past year has made data storage downright cheap and convenient.

CDs, DVDs, and Zip drives are just not great options any longer, at least in my opinion. Only external hard drives are really practical.

Up until recently, if you wanted a high capacity external drive for an affordable price, you had to go with a heavy, book-sized affair that plugged into the wall. These house full-sized, 3.5 inch drives. These are still solid options, of course.

But this is far more exciting: The tiny 2.5 inch drives (common in notebook computers) have fallen so much in price that they're very practical for external storage now.

I've been testing a tiny little external number, not much larger than an iPod, that weighs in at 120 gigabytes. It doesn't even need a wall-plug; it's powered by the same generic USB cable that transfers data to and from my notebook computer, though I can't guarantee that you'll have the same good luck.

Sure, 120 gigs is not very large. I bought this because it was cheap and I wanted to try it on the road. I like it. Like their bigger, 3.5 inch counterparts, these 2.5 inch drives can be bought as complete factory external models, or you can mate your own favorite drive with an enclosure kit, and this latter option is the one I've come to prefer.

I called MEGAbyte of Saipan computers about this. They carry external enclosures for 3.5 inch drives and for 2.5 inch drives, starting at $49 and $29 respectively. You can then pick out and buy the drive that suits your fancy, mount it in the enclosure, and you're in business. I'm going for 2.5 inch drives from now on; despite the cheaper enclosure price, the 2.5 inch drives cost more on a per gigabyte basis, but the convenience of the smaller arrangement has grown on me.

In fact, I think this is the year of the 2.5 inch drive. Heck, I think this is the month for them as well, given that Hitachi started shipping the first 2.5 inch 500 gigabyte drives (wow!) earlier in February. Samsung and Fujitsu will be following suit soon. I guess it will be a year before these large capacity drives drift into affordability for slobs like me, but it gives me something to look forward to.

Even today, with a humble 2.5 inch drive that holds 120 gb or 250 gb, you can probably fit every photo, every song, every letter, and every document you've ever had, plus some home videos as well, in your shirt pocket. Toss it (the drive, not your shirt) into your safe deposit box and, presto, you've saved the day.

Every month I hear a few sob stories from folks who have lost their data, often including photos, to some major or minor disaster. Computer pros often tell me that less than half of their customers back up their data on any kind of regular basis. That seems truly crazy to me.

After all, what is life but memories? Once digitized, they've never been cheaper, or easier, to safeguard.

Vista OCT

BETTER LIVING
By DAVID KHORRAM, M.D.
Special to the Saipan Tribune

David Khorram, MD is a board certified ophthalmologist and director of Marianas Eye Institute. Comments and questions are welcome. Call 235-9090 or email him through www.MarianasEye.com, or leave comments at www.MarianasEye.blogspot.com. *Copyright © 2008 David Khorram*

I just don't understand why smart companies keep releasing products that aren't quite ready to be released. It seems that every time a new "major improvement" in the world's most popular computer operating system comes out, it's on sale before it's good enough to be sold.

I just had a similar experience with some fancy medical equipment. A few years ago eye care was revolutionized by the invention of OCT, which stands for Ocular Coherence Tomography. This technology allows us to shine light into the eye, and in a matter of seconds, acquire a picture of the inside of the eye that allows us to look at the deep layers, and to measure their thickness. Think of it as a very high resolution CT scanner for the eye that allows us to see details of the retina and optic nerve not previously possible. Since its availability, OCT has supplanted other more invasive ways of looking at those tissues, and it has completely changed the way we manage diseases like macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy and glaucoma.

I love new technology, and anyone walking into my office can see how high-tech everything is. When I saw the OCT technology, the advantages were immediately clear. A few weeks after its release, our clinic plunked down the $50,000 and bought one. The benefit to our patients in improved care over the past several years has been amazing.

Now, a few years later, a new version of the OCT is available. Last month, at a conference, I spent about an hour looking at the new OCT. It's sort of a "high definition" OCT. It produces prettier pictures. Whereas the first machine produces a topographical map of the retina, this machine produces a topographical picture of the retina, much like taking a picture of a landscape while flying in a plane, and then being able to use the software to peel away the trees to see the contour of the top-soil, and then peel away the top-soil to see the contour of the rock beneath. It's very cool. I'm sitting there thinking, "I want one of these, and I'm ready to buy one." The cost, $75,000, minus the $25,000 the company will give us for a trade-in.

But then, the sales rep, Charlie, who I know well from years of working together to keep our clinic on the leading edge of technological developments, leans over and whispers, "Don't buy it." "Huh?" "Don't buy it." "Why not? It has really cool pictures." "It does," explains Charlie, "but the software will need a couple of years to catch up with your current OCT." "What do you mean? It has really cool pictures," I say again. "Yeah, it does. But we don't have enough data yet to know what 'normal' looks like with this machine. It can't do everything your OCT machine can do." "Well, thanks, Charlie, but isn't this supposed to be a better machine?" "Well, it will be when the software catches up, and right now, it does have nicer pictures, but that's not going to help you take better care of your patients." "So why are you selling these?" "Well, if you haven't bought an OCT yet, and you're considering getting a new one, then it's reasonable to get this one as something that will grow over the next few years." And just today, I read an article by one of the inventors of the OCT, saying the same thing.

So, as it turns out, the sexy new machine has a better body, but not the brain—sizzle, waiting for the steak. And I guess that's what often sells: the sizzle. The new machine is definitely in my future, but not until it can do everything my current OCT does.

Letters to the Editor

More than just token citizenship

The recent crashes of U.S. military planes occurring within a two-week span require our immediate attention. I am referring to the B-2 Stealth bomber and the EA-6B prowler crashes on Guam. I must also add that some two years earlier a U.S. military bomber veered off course and caused some building damage on Saipan due to high vibratory supersonic effects.

As local U.S. residents we must reconsider our purposeful whole beings. How these planes crashed or veered off course, whether through mechanical failure, human error or for whatever other reason, remain unknown at this time.

What would have happened if these planes were carrying nuclear warheads or conventional weapons for that matter? Would Guam and the Northern Marianas be ever be the same even if the best contingency plans are in place? Is being known as the strategic locations of the U.S. military for the Asia Pacific worth the price against the significant risks involved in this case? And is U.S. citizenship enough the price for the risks and dangers attendant in this case?

Let's all discuss this matter in greater depths. As U.S. citizens, we are not able to drink our water from the tap. Many of our residents still do not get 24-hour water. Our educational standards for our public students are still far below the standards in other states or territories of the United States. The performance of our public school students in the national standard examinations such as the Standard Aptitude Test is probably the lowest in the nation compared to other states and territories.

Our utility rates is perhaps the highest in the nation compared with other places in the U.S. Our electricity power rates for residential is presently about 24 cents per kilowatt hour, perhaps the highest in the nation. Therefore, it is not unusual to see our traffic lights on the islands turned off during regular business hours because the government has to reduce power usage.

Our cost of living is quite high compared to other U.S. states or territories. On Rota, for example, the price of fuel is now more than $5 per gallon. The cost of goods and other commodities on our islands, especially Rota and Tinian, are astronomically high.

On health care, many of our people still cannot afford to be referred off-island because of the high cost of transportation and the astronomical price of hospital services. Many of our residents could not afford the high cost of drugs and prescriptive medicines. The diabetes rate of our citizens is one of the highest in the nation on a per capita basis.

The price of one Stealth bomber is $1.2 billion or about seven times the size of the annual CNMI budget. The budget of the U.S. Department of Defense for fiscal year 2007 is reported to be $439.3 billion. It consists of operation and maintenance; personnel; procurement, research, development, testing and evaluation; military construction, family housing, and working capital funds.

Because our people here live in a "war zone" with exposure to continuous risks and dangers, day in and day out, our people deserve more than just token citizenship. It is embarrassing on the part of the U.S. military to continue operating in this area while the residents continue to live at or near substandard (Third World) living conditions, not to mention living in fear of a potential military strike.

And are these matters so small a sacrifice we are providing in the interest of homeland or national security? And are we to be considered in the same vein as residents of American Samoa or even the U.S. Virgin Islands, even though the level of risks and dangers for our people are vastly greater?

And here we are not only talking about the dangers posed by accidents from military planes but accidents that may also occur from military warships and shore-based activities…an off-target "stray" missile for the Farallon de Medinilla may just hit Saipan instead due to human error.

Let's face it: The United States' first and foremost interest in our place is our strategic location and nothing else! This is the time for all our people of the Mariana Islands to stand up, to band together and speak in one voice! And while questions on patriotism or even exploitation may surface, the issue here is about a fair and just America that we all love.

Juan Sablan Demapan
Former Senate President

So where did they get their profit?

To my constituent Paul Harsany of Precinct 3, Saipan:

If you understand that both Shell and Mobil are the suppliers and owners of most of the gas pumps on the island you would probably agree with my concerns.

First, let me say again that both Shell and Mobil have raised their prices twice this year, with the same supply in the tank until March 5th or later. Why are we paying the price of the new shipment that hasn't even arrived from the refinery in Singapore and their old stock still to be replenished?

If oil prices are not set by oil companies, then where and how did Mobil manage to earn a profit of 116 B-I-L-L-I-O-N DOLLARS in 2007? I'd say that both companies are greedy and are price gouging.

Paul, you are pissing on the wrong fire hydrant.

Rep. Stanley T. McGinnis(Irish) Torres
Capital Hill, Saipan

Sattelite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
Partly sunny with scattered showers in the morning, then isolated showers in the afternoon. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Mostly sunny with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲81° ▼75°	▲81° ▼75°	▲82° ▼75°	▲82° ▼74°	▲82° ▼74°

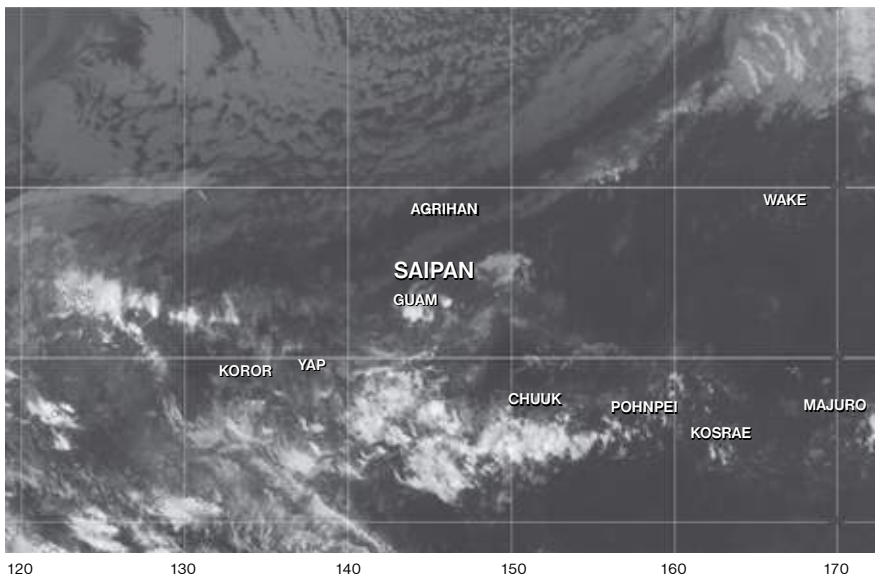
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Cloudy	▲84	▼76
Palau	Thunderstorms	▲86	▼77
Yap	Thunderstorms	▲86	▼77
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	▲88	▼78
Pohnpei	Partly Sunny	▲85	▼75
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	▲85	▼74
Majuro	Thundershowers	▲83	▼74

Around The Globe

Auckland	Mostly Sunny	▲75	▼67
Beijing	Partly Sunny	▲52	▼34
Hong Kong	Cloudy	▲65	▼57
Honolulu	Cloudy	▲79	▼68
London	Showers	▲52	▼48
Los Angeles	Cloudy	▲72	▼54
Manila	Thunderstorms	▲80	▼75
Melbourne	Partly Sunny	▲67	▼50
Miami	Partly Sunny	▲75	▼65
New York	Cloudy	▲36	▼32
Osaka	Partly Sunny	▲50	▼38
Paris	Rain	▲52	▼44
Pusan	Mostly Sunny	▲58	▼30
Rome	Cloudy	▲60	▼46
Salem	Showers	▲57	▼41
San Francisco	Mostly Sunny	▲62	▼48
Seoul	Sunny	▲41	▼22
Tokyo	Sunny	▲56	▼40
Washington, DC	Cloudy	▲46	▼34

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, THURSDAY, FEB. 28, 2008
Western North Pacific between Equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A surface trough of low pressure stretches from 11N145E to 16N147E. Scattered showers associated with the trough cover portions of the Marianas 80 miles either side of a line that stretches from 12N143E to 16N150E. An old shear line extends from 25N163E southwestward through the northern CNMI to 16N145E then to 12N140E and to 13N130E. Cloudiness and scattered showers are occurring along and up to 150 miles northwest of this boundary. A cold front extends southwestward from 25N157E to 17N140E to 15N130E. Extensive cloudiness and scattered showers are found along the front and northward to beyond 25N. Trade-wind convergence is producing scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms between 2N and 9N from 137E to 150E and between 3N and 6N from 150E to 160E. These areas cover portions of Chuuk and Pohnpei states. A second area of trade-wind convergence is generating scattered showers across the Marshall Islands between 3N and 8N from 168E to 180.

Tides

Saipan Harbor		
2:30AM Today	High Tide:	1.4 Feet
06:35AM Today	Low Tide:	1.3 Feet
11:54AM Today	High Tide:	1.7 Feet
08:08PM Today	Low Tide:	0.2 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:35AM	6:24PM
Saturday	6:34AM	6:25PM
Sunday	6:34AM	6:25PM
Monday	6:33AM	6:25PM
Tuesday	6:32AM	6:25PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	12:20AM	11:40AM
Saturday	01:13AM	12:30PM
Sunday	02:06AM	01:23PM
Monday	02:57AM	02:18PM
Tuesday	03:45AM	03:14PM

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

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- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

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For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

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- Fax: (670) 235-3740
- Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
- Drop off: 2nd Floor, CIC Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

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ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF FEBRUARY 15, 2008

DEPARTURES

Saipan-Rota			
CO 9313	8:30am	9:05am	3,4,7
Saipan-Guam			
CO9317	5:00am	5:50am	Daily
CO9597	8:30am	9:20am	1,2,5,6
CO9313	8:30am	10:00am	3,4,7 via Rota
CO9601	12:30pm	1:20pm	Daily
CO9603	3:30pm	4:20pm	Daily
CO9605	6:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
CO9599	9:30pm	10:20pm	Daily
Saipan-Narita			
NW 078	8:25am	1:30pm	Daily via Nagoya
NW 075	4:50pm	7:30pm	Daily
Saipan-Osaka			
NW 083	4:30pm	7:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Nagoya			
NW 078	8:25am	11:05am	Daily
Saipan-Manila			
CO 895	4:45pm	6:35pm	6
CO 895	6:45pm	8:35pm	3
Saipan-Seoul			
OZ 604	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ 604	2:40am	6:30am	2,3,4,5,6,7
OZ 606	3:30pm	7:00pm	2,4,6,7
Saipan-Busan			
OZ 608	4:00am	7:35am	1,4,5,7
Saipan-Guanzhou			
CZ 3008	5:00am	8:00am	2,6
Saipan-Shanghai			
MU 590	4:20am	7:00am	2,6
Guam-Manila			
CO 891	6:00am	10:30am	3 via Yap and Koror
CO 893	6:30am	8:05am	6
CO 893	8:25am	10:00am	2,7
CO 893	5:50pm	9:10pm	5 via Koror
CO 933	8:00pm	9:40pm	Daily
PR 111	6:00am	7:45am	1,2,4,6,7
Guam-Hongkong			
CO 909	7:45pm	10:40pm	1,5
Guam-Rota			
CO 9598	10:15am	10:45am	1,2,6

ARRIVALS

Rota-Saipan			
CO 9598	11:10am	11:45am	1,2,6
Guam-Saipan			
CO 9316	2:30am	3:20am	Daily
CO9596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
CO9598	10:15am	11:45am	1,2,6 via Rota
CO9600	10:45am	11:35am	3,4,5,7
CO9602	2:00pm	2:50pm	Daily
CO9604	5:00pm	5:50pm	Daily
CO9606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily
Narita-Saipan			
NW 076	10:35am	3:05pm	Daily
NW 077	6:15pm	1:10am+1	Daily via Nagoya
Osaka-Saipan			
NW 084	10:40am	3:10pm	Daily
Nagoya-Saipan			
NW 077	8:45pm	1:10am+1	Daily
Manila-Saipan			
CO 890	9:15am	2:55pm	6
CO 890	11:45am	5:35pm	3
Seoul-Saipan			
OZ 605	9:00am	2:30pm	2,4,6,7
OZ 603	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ 603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1,2,3,4,5,6
Busan-Saipan			
OZ 607	9:30pm	2:50am+1	3,4,6,7
Guanzhou-Saipan			
CZ 3007	8:00pm	4:00am+1	1,5
Shanghai-Saipan			
MU 589	8:05pm	3:00am+1	1,5
Manila-Guam			
CO 894	11:20am	4:55pm	2,7
CO 894	7:45pm	1:20am+1	6
CO 892	9:45pm	5:25am+1	3 via Koror
CO 892	9:45pm	6:30am+1	3 via Koror and Yap
CO 892	10:10pm	5:30am+1	5 via Koror
CO 934	11:10pm	4:40am+1	Daily
PR 110	10:15pm	4:00am+1	1,3,5,6,7
Hongkong-Guam			
CO 910	11:40pm	6:20am+1	1,5
Rota-Guam			
CO 9313	9:30am	10:00am	3,4,7

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; PR: Philippine Airlines; CZ: China Southern; CA: Air China; NW: Northwest; JO: Japan Airlines; OZ: Asiana; MU: China Eastern ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

JOETEN'S

SAVINGS THAT MAKE CENTS!

Bargain In Every Aisle!

Sale starts on Feb. 29 to March 5

Mens Nautica Tee Shirts Printed Logo $19.99

Mens Hooded Thermal Jacket $11.99

Boys L/S White Shirt $9.99

Boys Microfiber Short Assorted $5.99

Ladies Icicle Creek Tank $5.99

Girls Round Neck Top $4.79

Girls French Toast Denim Pant $10.99

Infants Over All with Shirt Assorted Colors $1.29

Infants Vest Assorted Colors $1.29/ea.

Pyrex Baking Dish $12.99

Best Buys!

Salton 7 Cups Rice Cooker $25.99

Best Buys!

Proctor Toaster Oven Broiler $32.99

Rival 12" Electric Skillet $36.99

Best Buys!

Rubbermaid Storage Tote $7.39

LOW LOW PRICES

Supermarket

Danish Pork Spare Ribs 10 lbs. $14.99/cs.

New Zealand Boneless Beef Clod $1.99/lb.

New Zealand Beef For Stew Family Bag 7lb. $14.99

Chicken Leg Quarter 33lb./case $23.99/cs.

Chicken Leg Quarter 22lb./case $16.99/cs.

US Pork Spareribs 30lbs./case $19.99/cs.

TILAPIA 99¢/lb.

WF Cotton Balls 360ct. $1.09

WF Cotton Swabs 300 cts. $1.99

Aquamarine Lotion 14.8oz. $1.49

Suave Shampoo 15oz. $1.49

Rubbermaid Storage Snap Box $10.49

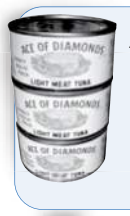
Triopix Water Tumbler 89¢

Hanging Storage Bin $1.99

Easy Sweep Corn Broom $2.79

Ceramic Bathroom Set $14.99

Full Length Mirror 100cmx 30cm $7.99



New Zealand 1/2 Shell Mussels 2.2lb. $5.99/ea.

Best Buys! MILKFISH $1.29/lb.

Folgers Regular Instant Coffee 12oz. Limit 1 $5.99/ea.

ACE Diamonds Tuna in water 7oz. 89¢/ea.

Red Bull Energy Drink 250ml $1.89/ea.

Ajax Liquid Laundry Detergent 50oz./32 Loads $3.49/ea.

Western Family Ultra Regukar Bleach 96oz. $3.59/ea.

Angel Soft Bathroom Tissue 4 Rolls $1.99/ea.

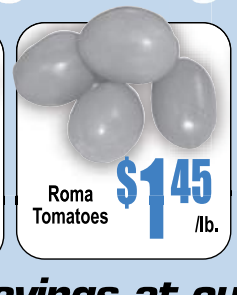
Charmin Reg. Bathroom Tissue 24 Rolls Limit 1 $7.99/ea.

U.S.P.!

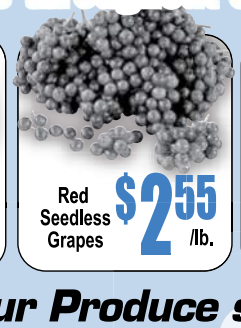
Look for these and more great savings throughout our store!

Gala Apples $1.59/lb.

Oranges 89¢/lb.



Roma Tomatoes $1.45/lb.



Red Seedless Grapes $2.55/lb.

Baby Carrots $1.39/bg.

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SPECIALS OF THE WEEK

2004 RAV-4 4WD
Auto, Beige
Stock: U07-007T
License: ACB-455
Mileage: 41649
$14,999

USED CARS

STOCK	YEAR	MODEL	TRANS.	MILEAGE	COLOR	LICENSE #	PRICE
TOYOTA SEDANS							
R07-025F	2004	CAMRY LE 4DR	AUTO	43820	BEIGE	ACC-860	13,999
GM CARS							
R07-031F	2005	AVEO 4DR.	AUTO	68515	YELLOW	ABY-169	8,999
R07-035F	2005	AVEO 4DR.	AUTO	63367	WHITE	ACD-026	8,699
R07-013F	2005	AVEO HATCHBACK	AUTO	39164	ORANGE	ADO-022	7,899
R07-023F	2005	AVEO HATCHBACK	AUTO	32635	WHITE	ABX-679	9,599
R07-034F	2005	OPTRA 4DR.	AUTO	14592	SILVER	ACD-020	10,999
U07-075R	2005	EPICA 4DR.	AUTO	10098	BEIGE	ACA-204	8,999
TOYOTA TRUCKS							
R07-036B	2003	TACOMA 4X4 D/CAB	AUTO	85270	RED	ABR-739	15,999
R07-038F	2004	TACOMA 4X4 XTRACAB	AUTO	49609	BEIGE	ABV-159	11,899
U08-014P	2004	TACOMA 4X2	MANUAL	44000	WHITE	ACA-948	12,500
OTHER CARS & TRUCKS							
U08-007P	2005	HYUNDAI SANTA FE 4DR.	AUTO	48717	BLACK	ACE-248	11,599
U07-106P	2004	HONDA CIVIC DX DR.	AUTO	50416	SILVER	ADF-401	8,999
U07-107P	2004	HONDA CIVIC DX DR.	AUTO	48755	SILVER	ADF-421	8,999
U07-108P	2004	HONDA CIVIC DX DR.	AUTO	45099	SILVER	ADF-431	8,999
U07-109P	2004	HONDA CIVIC DX DR.	AUTO	43869	SILVER	ADF-371	8,999
U07-034T	2000	NISSAN MAXIMA GXE 4DR.	AUTO	68648	WHITE	ACT-812	8,399
U07-104T	2003	NISSAN MURANO SE	AUTO	32000	PEWT	ABZ-615	16,799
U07-095T	1999	MAZDA MILLENIA 4DR. SEDAN	AUTO	91014	SILVER	ABP-583	7,999
U07-118T	2004	MAZDA MX3 4DR. SEDAN	AUTO	33366	SILVER	ADH-312	12,799
CONSIGNMENT	2001	FORD ESCAPE	AUTO	39530	BLUE	ABW-458	10,899
VANS							
U07-096T	2000	SIENNA XLE	AUTO	92766	GRAY	ACO-561	8,999
R08-001F	2004	SIENNA LE	AUTO	164483	WHITE	ABY-567	12,999
SPORT UTILITY							
U07-064T	2001	4RUNNER 4WD	AUTO	56882	CHAMPAIGNE	ABY-153	13,599
U07-050T	2002	RAV4 4DR. 4WD	AUTO	39182	WHITE	ABW-677	12,799
U07-082P	2004	RAV4 4DR. 2WD	AUTO	68919	GRAY		13,599

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2x4x16	$6.10/Pc	$5.75/Pc
2x4x18	$6.90/Pc	$6.30/Pc
2x4x20	$7.40/Pc	$6.90/Pc

Galvalume Roof Tin
from Korea, better quality, long time no rusty

Thin-Set Mortar:
$9.80 Custom (c.cure), gray, from U.S.
$8.80 Nicbond, 55lbs/bag

OVERSIZED AND DAMAGED MAHOGANY LUMBERS
35% OFF
U.S. UTILITY LUMBERS 2*6/2*8
20% OFF

HOLLOW BLOCKS (CMU)
4"..... $0.50/pc
6"..... $0.60/pc
8"..... $0.70/pc

CEILING/WALL LAMPS
30% OFF

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FOR ELECTRICAL ITEMS!

NEW ARRIVAL VINYL TILES
NEW ARRIVAL CERAMIC TILES

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$13.00/gal
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$17.00/gal
Bondiflex, water proof
$18.00/gal

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Plywood 25% off
Mahogany lumber 35% off
Metal stud/track $4/pc
Door(louver/screen) 35% off
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Tie wire G20/G22 $0.4/lb
10' pvc white pipe 4" $12/pc
Ceiling tile 2'*4' $3.00/pc
Rope $2/pc
US lumber 15% off
Roof tin 15% off
Shower room 35% off
Window 35% off
Cement board $4/pc
Downspout $8/pc
Squre bar $4/pc
Formica $5/pc
Ceramic tile $0.3/pc

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Letters to the Editor

Ref association on a power trip

The decision that BANMI's ref association placed to ban John Sablan and relatives as well as totally disband the whole Ulloa team entirely was too harsh of a penalty. This decision is simply a dose of power trip by the association's referees. You've got to be kidding me. The worst of suspensions are levied on players that fight during games. At the pro-level, these suspensions (i.e. Nuggets-Pistons) don't go more than half the season.

I was actually shocked to hear that BANMI has done this to John and his team, which is composed mostly of players from San Antonio. As a result of John using freedom of speech in a previous letter regarding the exposure of refs being biased, what John got was a big slap on the hand. I've played with each and every one of those banned players whether it be with or against them. Yes, they are rough and aggressive for that matter but the reason these guys play aggressive is because of the competitive nature in them that makes them win championships. What are they supposed to do? Let the other players step all over them. No! San Antonio has a history of producing talented basketball players because the village seems restricted to play basketball entirely because they're either physically just born to play the game or we just don't have the facilities to play other sports such as baseball, soccer, etc. I hope that these refs really aren't biased with their calls because they personify players from San Antonio as troublemakers. I'm pretty sure that the sports community will agree with this, that this game is essentially the reason why a lot of players, young or old, stay out of trouble. Take the game away from them and go figure.

For whatever reason that Mr. Aguon and his referee association has against them, they basically took this game that Ulloa plays so well, and ultimately took away his formidable if not his best competition in the men's and 25 and under league. Do you see conflict of interest here? With my utmost respect to BANMI president Eli Rangamar, I think that his idea to form a coaches association is a great idea and would alleviate some of these conflicts of interest.

With regards to the referees, they have no right to affect the game's final outcome especially in its dying seconds. They should just leave it to the players. This has been an issue in college basketball in recent months, where refs were suspended for a certain amount of games without pay.

I respect BANMI's decision to suspend players but I felt that it was too harsh. Also to ban the team name entirely is also uncalled for. Why punish the whole team for the fault of one player. There is no "I" in team.

In retrospect to what I just stated, the refs association might just suspend me for all I had to say in this letter.

Eric G. Palacios
via e-mail

Stop the hate!

Dear Mr. Gregorio Cruz:

I am happy that you exercise your right to express your opinions about all the things that you think matter in our world. You have every right to. I am sad, however, that you believe Father Billotti should refrain from commenting or expressing his opinions. I think this time you have gone too far.

Priests are human beings, too—they all have opinions. They too have to live in this society with us; they are not immune to the problems we are all facing. When we do have problems, some of us go to these very priests for counseling, they advise us, they help us with our problems. They are not influenced by greed or fame like some of us. They are not biased. I for one, value their opinion, whether it be on personal relationships or politics.

I had to ask myself how someone could be filled with so much hate, so much anger. I have this awful feeling that you were probably neglected as a child. You must have had a very difficult childhood. That is probably why you enjoy the attention you are creating for yourself. It is really sad and I am sorry for your upbringing but I suggest you seek counseling. Maybe Father Billotti can help you get over your anger and help you to forgive those who have hurt you.

You really should stop making other people write your letters for you. They are making you look really bad. You probably think that these letters "you" continue to write make you look smart. But they really make you look arrogant and egotistical! You should start using your heart to write your own letters, then maybe you wouldn't be perceived as being cruel and cold-hearted. I think I can expect a letter from you real soon; not to worry I won't take it personally.

However, I really wish you would please stop all the hate that you are spreading. 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Linda Pangelinan
via e-mail

Attention WASC: NMC needs to be transparent

This morning I spoke with a CNMI resident/American citizen of long standing who had applied for an instructor's position at NMC. He had just returned from a Department of Labor hearing that was necessitated when NMC hired a foreign national over him, a highly qualified American citizen. Labor's investigation uncovered that NMC had somehow changed the title of the position after the citizen had filed his application, assisted the foreign national in obtaining a temporary visa, and hired her.

According to this American citizen, Labor was quite concerned about this action, but admitted that NMC had found a way around hiring him. If in fact no law was violated, wouldn't it at least appear that NMC was not transparent and not ethical? Was the citizen informed of the change of the title of the position? Was he somehow expected to figure that out on his own? Is the NMC system for hiring in any way flawed? Do they intentionally have it that way to have more latitude in hiring? Is that following the letter of the law but not the intent? And aren't we right back to unethical behavior? I wonder?

And just as I am completing this letter, the February 28th edition of the *Tribune* ran an article about the protest filed by John Gonzales concerning the hiring of NMC's Director of Institutional Effectiveness. According to the article's author, Gonzales submitted his application on Jan. 22 to NMC's HR Department, only to be told two days later that President Fernandez "was not enthused about my application and [she] directed that my application be 'filed.'" Again, this begs the question as to the procedures in NMC hiring and firing practices. Did Fernandez really take the above action? What about the committee that should have been charged with reviewing qualifications of the candidates, and subsequently interviewing them? Might a reasonable person come to the conclusion that the practices at NMC are highly flawed? Perhaps, in fact, they are illegal? For sure, not saturated in ethics. Come on, NMC, what's up? It might also appear that Fernandez is simply running the institution into the ground to an early demise. Was she actually hired to do that? Since no one is talking, how can we figure out what is really happening? Does anybody care?

Many of us are still waiting to know what was behind the resignation of Danny Wyatt as dean of NMC? Was it in any way connected to the not long ago "hiring flap" in the Nursing Department? Is there a new department chair for Nursing? If so, what happened to the former department chair? Does anybody know? Will anybody say? What isn't being said? Does anybody care?

Perry Conner
As Matuis, Saipan

Letters to the Editor

Increase the minimum wage

With the prices of gas and commodities soaring, why is this governor trying to stop the wage increase? Three dollars and fifty-five cents can't buy a gallon of gas. That can't even buy a decent lunch.

Many minimum wage earners are going to lose hope if the wage does not increase. Many residents are now working in the private sector because there is nowhere else to work. They barely make $200 per paycheck. The wage increase is supposed to encourage residents to work in the private sector instead of relying on the government for jobs.

We continue to make it difficult for residents to earn a decent living. Nonresidents are going to continue to outnumber residents in the private sector if the wages don't increase. Nonresidents get better benefits than residents. Expect more copper wire thefts, poker robberies, drug deals, and burglaries to come if the wages are still to remain dirt low. Residents will continue to compete with cheap foreign labor.

Raise the minimum wage to at least $5.05 per hour. Nothing is wrong with having nonresident workers; however, they shouldn't outnumber the residents. It is ridiculous that there is only a 20 percent local hire requirement for companies. Make it 50 percent! Twenty percent may have worked in the past when there were many government jobs available. It's time to adapt to the changes of today. More residents are leaving the islands, while the nonresidents continue to occupy majority of the jobs in the private sector.

Reduce the size of the Legislature by half! Get rid of municipal councils! Quit wasting our money on consultants and lobbyists! Lower the pay of agency directors who make over $60,000 and judges who make over $100,000! Increase the taxes for Mobil, they made record breaking profits in 2007! *Fanachu Chamorro! Biba tano Chamorro!*

Jesse Torres
Kagman, Saipan

Trusting the US system

These past two days or so, the Japanese media is filled with news about Kazuyoshi Miura, the alleged wife killer who had been declared innocent by Japanese jurisdiction and was recently arrested on Saipan.

Miura uses media attention as a tool of getting sympathy like gossip targets do. His former lawyer expressed anger why the once settled case is going to be put to trial on the soil of U.S., etc. But the family of the murdered wife was pleased to see if the justice came to a right conclusion this time around. I think U.S. at least has a good law applicable to solve these cases even if how many years have passed after the incident.

Masami Kawamoto
via e-mail

Annual Baha'i Fast cleanses, challenges mind and body

From March 2 to 20, Baha'is worldwide will rise before dawn to eat breakfast, pray and then abstain from eating or drinking until sunset in observation of the annual 19-day Fast.

Like Lent in Christianity and Ramadan in Islam, the Bahá'í Fast is essentially a period of meditation and prayer when the individual (ages 15-70) reflects on his or her own spiritual progress and makes an effort to detach from material desires. As one Baha'i stated, "During the fast, we make an effort to become more thoughtful about the purpose of our lives."

The Faith exempts from fasting those who are ill, traveling, pregnant, nursing, menstruating or engaged in heavy labor.

Abdu'l-Baha, the son and appointed successor of Baha'u'llah, prophet founder of the Bahá'i Fatih, wrote that "Fasting is the cause of awakening man. The heart becomes tender and the spirituality of man increases."

Abdu'l-Baha described how the Prophets of God—including Moses, Jesus, Muhammad and Baha'u'llah—all fasted. He said the Baha'i period of fasting allows believers to feel closer to the founders of the great religions by sharing this experience.

Saipan resident David Khorram says he and his fellow Baha'is look forward to this opportunity to draw closer to our creator. "I think one of the greatest lessons of the Fast for me over the years has been practicing self-restraint. It seems like an impossibility to not eat when you're so hungry, or drink when you're so thirsty, but you learn to practice self-restraint for a higher good. The absence of that single virtue—self-restraint—seems to be at the root of so much of the corruption in today's world. Self-discipline. It's a way of exercising mastery over that most unwieldy of creatures, the self."

The Bahá'í Faith, the second most widely spread religion in the world after Christianity, has more than five million members worldwide, of whom 142,000 reside in the United States and approximately 400 in the Mariana Islands. ***(PR)***

NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS COUNCIL FOR THE HUMANITIES

BOARD VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

The board of directors for the Northern Mariana Islands Council for the Humanities (Council) wishes to announce two board vacancies. Applicants can be from Tinian, Rota and Saipan.

The Council's board comprises thirteen volunteer members who serve three year terms and can be renewed once only. The Council strives to maintain a board that reflects a broad cross section of our community. The ideal candidates will have a strong desire to promote the Council's mission, programs, and activities. Council members are expected to engage in creative development of programs; encourage regrant applicants and recipients on their programs; and be active in the Council activities as well as the administrative requirements. Council members are unlike the usual board membership in that they are often called upon to participate in programs; develop programs; and promote programs of the Council.

The Council is a non-profit private corporation affiliated with the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). The Council's mission is to foster awareness, understanding and appreciation of the Humanities through support of educational programs that relate the humanities to the indigenous cultures and to the intellectual needs and interests of the people of the Commonwealth.

Board responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Attending regular Council meetings four times annually.
- Attending periodic committee meetings.
- Evaluating Council programs and activities.
- Reviewing grant applications.
- Raising funds.
- Providing input from the community.
- Attending conferences, workshops and other meetings relating to the humanities.
- Willing to spend from 2-4 hours per month on Council activities, particularly as Chair of a committee.

Interested residents are invited to submit their letters of interest and resumes to **Herman T. Guerrero, Chair, Northern Mariana Islands Council for the Humanities, P.O. Box 506437 Saipan, MP 96950 or fax them to the Council at 235-4786**. Letters and resumes must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. on **March 26, 2008**. For additional information please contact the Council's Executive Director at telephone 235-4785 or visit the Council's website at http://nmi.humanities.org.

STUDENT SAFETY Kindergarten students at Tinian Elementary School are briefed by Fireman Ike Kiyoshi after their fire drill as Kindergarten teachers Lou Connie Manglona and Celina QC Farrell looks on. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Zoning underway on Saipan

Hundreds of people have submitted documents to verify that their buildings, signs, and businesses were already in place on Feb. 1, the date on which the new Saipan zoning law went into effect.

Zoning board chair Henry Hofschneider said that that implementation of the Saipan zoning law has been very successful so far.

"We have been very pleased with the positive attitude that the public has taken to zoning since it went into effect. We are fulfilling Governor Fitial's plan for zoning to improve the climate for economic development and quality of life on Saipan," he said

Zoning administrator Steve Tilley said that documenting the existence of current buildings, signs, and businesses will help avoid later confusion about whether particular signs, uses, or structures were grandfathered under the new law.

In addition, the Zoning Office has received a number of applications for new businesses to occupy existing buildings, construction of new buildings, signs, and single-family homes.

"All these require approval under the zoning law, and applicants have been very cooperative in complying with the law," Tilley said.

He also cited the cooperation of other agencies; the Department of Finance, Public Works, Division of Environmental Quality, and Coastal Resource Management Office have all been encouraging applicants to contact the Zoning Office about whether they need zoning approval.

Already this year the Zoning Office has offered training to numerous groups. Groups attending zoning sessions included landowners and developers, the general public, sign makers, adult businesses, government agencies, the Korean Association, and surveyors.

"We're available to do an orientation session about the new zoning law for any group that calls us," said Tilley. He noted that village meetings will soon be scheduled so that residents can learn how the zoning law will affect their particular neighborhood.

People often ask the Zoning Office how we will ensure everyone is complying. Tilley said, "One of the ways is to get help from the public. Anyone can ask the Zoning Office to investigate if a new development complies with the law. This will help us keep track of new projects and ensure they're getting zoning approval." ***(Zoning Board)***

Zoning announces two new projects

The Zoning Board is beginning two new projects: to establish zones for adult businesses and to fine-tune the Zoning Law.

According to Zoning Board chair Henry Hofschneider, "the Zoning Board is constantly considering how to implement as well as improve the Saipan Zoning law."

The establishment of zones for adult businesses will be discussed at the board's March meeting, which is open to the public. To find out more about the meeting and how to attend, visit the Zoning website at www.zoning.gov.mp, or call the Zoning Office at 234-9663.

The second project, fine-tuning the Zoning Law, is an offshoot of several suggestions made to improve the existing law.

"We think the core of the law is very good and we've received a number of excellent suggestions already on how to enhance it," said Hofschneider.

The board encourages anyone with suggestions to improve the language of the law or to change zone boundaries to contact the Zoning Office.

"A form is available on the website (www.zoning.gov.mp) or at the DanDan office (234-9663) that makes it easy to submit suggestions," said Zoning administrator Steve Tilley. "Or if you would like to discuss your idea, you can call the office and we'll be pleased to talk with you."

The Zoning Office will be receiving suggestions until March 14 for the board to consider them at its April meeting. Once the board is satisfied with the package of proposed amendments, it will circulate them for public review and comment. Ultimately any proposed amendments will be sent to the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation, which will decide whether to amend the Zoning Law. ***(Zoning Board)***

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PORK HOCKS	$7.95
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BEEF OXTAIL	$16.95
BEEF STEW	$12.95
RIBEYE STEAK	$17.95
BEEF TOP ROUND STEAK	$14.95
SMOKED HAM STEAK	$12.95
PORK BUTT	$10.95

Budweiser / Budlight 24/Case Warm Only $22.99

Chamorro Punch 1 Gal. $8.99

Volcanic haze returns to Saipan, Tinian

The volcanic haze emanating from Anatahan Island was once again present on both Saipan and Tinian yesterday, prompting the Emergency Management Office to warn people with respiratory problems to remain indoors until the air and sulfur odor clears from the area.

In a volcanic haze and sulfur advisory it issued yesterday, EMO said that concentrations of volcanic gases should be low but the haze and odor may bother people with respiratory problems. "People who experience breathing problems should remain indoors," the advisory stated.

All mariners were also reminded to take precautionary measures due to low visibility.

The agency said that a U.S. Geological Survey report indicates that Anatahan has been putting out gas and steam plume. Based on local observations of sulfurous odors and wind shifting in a northerly direction, it appears that volcanic haze has moved in to Saipan and Tinian from Anatahan Island, carried by low level winds, it said.

"The USGS could detect on satellite a light to variable plume at Anatahan. We expect the haze to mingle around our area for several hours or more," EMO said.

Based on the SO2 analyzer reading at the EMO, it indicated 77ppb (parts per billions) as of 3:15pm yesterday.

Tune in to local radio broadcasts or local news sources and log in at www.cnmiemo.gov.mp on the Internet for future statements and advisories. ***(Jayvee Vallejera)***

WHAT TO DO

People with lung problems or other serious illnesses:

■ If you have lung problems, it is best to stay indoors while ash is falling.

■ Asthmatic children should remain indoors while ash is falling.

■ Seek medical care if you are feeling shortness of breath.

■ Commonwealth Health Center is prepared to handle any increase in patients due to respiratory problems.

Do not drink water that is contaminated by heavy ash fall:

■ If you are using a roof collection water supply, disconnect it;

■ If the water supply tank is open, cover it.

■ If the water source has an acid taste or smell, do not consume the water.

■ Affected water is safe for cleaning vegetables and fruit. The ash will not harm fruits or vegetables, but wash them thoroughly.

■ Affected water is safe for washing clothes. Use extra detergent in your washer.

■ Affected water is safe for showering.

When outside:

■ If the ash gets thick, cover your mouth and nose. Volcanic ash can irritate your respiratory system. You can use a mask or a simple piece of cloth.

■ Keep skin covered to avoid irritation from contact with ash. Use goggles if ash fall gets heavy.

■ If the ash fall gets thick, clear roofs of ash fall. Ash fall is very heavy and can cause buildings to collapse. Exercise great caution when working on a roof.

■ Avoid driving in heavy ash fall. Driving will stir up more ash that can clog engines and stall vehicles.

Source: CNMI Emergency Management Office

TAGA BEACH JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

The clear blue waters of the popular Taga Beach is seen at the south end of Tinian, within walking distance of the village of San Jose and the Tinian Dynasty Hotel and Casino.

Accreditation efforts focus of NMC board meeting

As part of its heightened efforts to closely monitor the Northern Marianas College's compliance with accreditation requirements, the Board of Regents tackled at its most recent meeting key issues and concerns that have been raised by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges.

"We want to ensure that we are providing the level of assistance that the College needs to overcome the Show Cause status," said Joey San Nicolas, acting chairperson of the Board of Regents.

During the meeting, the board members received an update from NMC president Dr. Carmen Fernandez about the different activities that she and her staff have been undertaking to meet accreditation standards. The president also briefed them about the legislative bill that was recently introduced to infuse critically needed funds to repair many of the school's physical structures, as well as the approval of a federal grant in the amount of $400,000 that would upgrade the college's information technology infrastructure.

"The additional funds that these sources will provide directly address the concerns from the accrediting commission," San Nicolas said. "Rest assured we will be working diligently to ensure the swift passage and processing of the availability of funds."

Raaj Kurapati, chief financial officer and administrative officer, informed that board that the college has already addressed many of the recommendations from previous audits. Other recommendations, on the other hand, will require legislative action, which the board members promptly agreed to address by meeting with legislative leaders.

The board members also received a briefing about program assessment and evaluation—chief ACCJC concerns—from Dr. Debra Cabrera, acting Dean for Academic Programs. At the conclusion of Cabrera's report, the board committed to undergoing an assessment work session especially designed for board members.

Members of the Board of Regents also welcomed news about the outpouring of support from the community. NMC president Fernandez reported that the college has received expressions of support from Gov. Benigno R. Fitial, Washington Representative Pete A. Tenorio, the Legislature, other Commonwealth leaders, students, parents, and community members.

"We are overwhelmed at the support that we have received in the past few days," San Nicolas said. "We will continue to openly and publicly report our progress to meet accreditation standards in a frequent and timely manner." ***(NMC)***

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Korea's Lotte Tour opens branch on Saipan

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSISTANT EDITOR

One of South Korea's biggest tour companies, Lotte Tour, opened its Saipan branch on the second floor of Laderra Center in San Jose in simple ceremonies Wednesday.

Company top brass led by managing director Han-Chul Park and manager Yong-Ho Song joined Lotte Tour Saipan general manager Eun-Soo Ji in welcoming over 80 guests that dropped by to wish the new Saipan tour company good luck.

Ji said that, after depending on other Saipan-based tour agencies to arrange the travel arrangements of their customers the past years, he is happy that Lotte Tour had decided to open its own branch in the Commonwealth.

He said his company is optimistic about the future of the CNMI tourism industry and its potential to attract visitors from Korea.

Ji added that he and his staff of four tour agents will work around the clock to serve Lotte Tour's valued customers.

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial, through his press secretary Charles P. Reyes, congratulated Lotte Tours for the opening of its Saipan branch.

"I welcome these developments and business activities in the private sector, and wish Lotte Tour much success with its expanded investments in the CNMI market," said Fitial. "The Lotte Tour development only further confirms the upward trend in South Korean tourism and investment brought about in large part by Kumho Asiana's significant investment commitment to our islands."

After a brief ceremony, which included a traditional Korean custom that paid respect to their forefathers, Lotte Tour officials treated visitors to a late buffet lunch of Korean food and delicacies.

Guests included staff from Saipan hotels, Asiana Airlines, and other tour agencies in the CNMI.

Lotte Tour managing director Han-Chul Park, Lotte Tour Saipan general manager Eun-Soo Ji, and Lotte Tour manager Yong-Ho Song pose for a photo during Wednesday's grand opening of the Lotte Tour Travel agency on Beach Road.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

CNMI DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS MONTH MARCH 2008 ACTIVITIES

SUCCESS
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March 3rd, 2008

1. **Normal Parenting Issues**
   Presenter(s): Dr. Willi Gutowski
   Venue: Aqua Resort, Saipan
   Time: 8:30am - 10:00am
2. **Common Childhood Disorders**
   Presenter(s): Dr. Willi Gutowski
   Venue: Aqua Resort, Saipan
   Time: 10:00am - 11:30am

*****Lunch will be provided *****
Note: Please call the CNMI Council on DD at 664-7000 to register. Seating is Limited

March 5th, 2008

1. **Person First Language**
   Presenter(s): Melena A. Slaven, M.A.
   Venue: Tinian Dynasty Hotel
   Time: 8:30am - 11:00am

*****Lunch will be provided *****
2. **Resiliency**
   Presenter(s): Melena A. Slaven, M.A.
   Venue: Tinian Dynasty Hotel
   Time: 12:00pm - 2:00pm
3. **Child Care Services & Licensing-DC & CA**
   Presenter(s): Maribel Loste & Virginia N. Mahora
   Venue: Tinian Dynasty Hotel
   Time: 2:00pm - 3:30pm

Note: Please call the CNMI Council on DD at 664-7000 to register. Seating is Limited

March 6th, 2008

1. **Self-Advocacy—Discrimination**
   Presenter(s): NMPASI: Greg Borja & Tom Thornburg
   Venue: Tinian Dynasty Hotel
   Time: 8:30am - 11:30am

*****Lunch will be provided *****
2a. 13 Developmental Disabilities
2b. Career Assessment for People with Developmental Disabilities
2c. What is UCEDD?
2d. What is Section 504?
   Presenter(s): NMC-UCEDD: Carol Hosono & John Manalo
   Venue: Tinian Dynasty Hotel
   Time: 1:00pm—3:00pm

Note: Please call the CNMI Council on DD at 664-7000 to register. Seating is Limited

March 7th, 2008

1. **Outreach Survey at Tinian Elementary, Junior-High School**
   Conducted by: CNMI Council on DD, Family Hope Center, CNMI Assistive Technology Program, NMC-UCEDD, and NMPASI
2. **Outreach Survey in the Community/Family Home Visit**
   Conducted by: CNMI Council on DD, Family Hope Center, CNMI Assistive Technology Program, NMC-UCEDD, and NMPASI

March 8th, 2008

1. **BUDDY Walk**
   Sponsored by: CNMI Association of Families with Disabilities, CNMI Cancer Association, & First Lady's Vision
   Venue: Taga Beach, San Jose Tinian
   Time: 5:30am – 9:00am
2. **Family Picnic**
   Sponsored by: CNMI Council on Developmental Disabilities & Family Hope Center
   Venue: Taga Beach, Tinian
   Time: 9:00am – 2:00pm

March 10th, 2008

CNMI Council on Developmental Disabilities "Open House"
Building No. 1310 and 1312
Anatahan Drive, Capitol Hill, Saipan
Time: 8:00am – 4:00pm

March 12th, 2008

1. **Outreach Survey at Rota Elementary, Junior-High School**
   Conducted by: CNMI Council on DD, Family Hope Center, CNMI Assistive Technology Program, & NMC-UCEDD
2. **Outreach Survey in the Community/Family Home Visit**
   Conducted by: CNMI Council on DD, Family Hope Center, CNMI Assistive Technology Program, & NMC-UCEDD

March 13th, 2008

1. **Self-Advocacy—Discrimination**
   Presenter(s): NMPASI: Greg Borja & Tom Thornburg
   Venue: As Paris Restaurant, Rota
   Time: 8:30am - 11:30am

*****Lunch will be provided *****
2a. 13 Developmental Disabilities
2b. Career Assessment for People with Developmental Disabilities
2c. What is UCEDD?
2d. What is Section 504?
   Presenter(s): NMC-UCEDD: Carol Hosono & John Manalo
   Venue: As Paris Restaurant, Rota
   Time: 1:00pm—3:00pm

Note: Please call the CNMI Council on DD at 664-7000 to register. Seating is Limited

March 14th, 2008

1. **Person First Language**
   Presenter(s): Melena A. Slaven, M.A.
   Venue: As Paris Restaurant, Rota
   Time: 8:30am - 11:00am

*****Lunch will be provided *****
2. **Resiliency**
   Presenter(s): Melena A. Slaven, M.A.
   Venue: As Paris Restaurant, Rota
   Time: 12:00pm - 2:00pm

Note: Please call the CNMI Council on DD at 664-7000 to register. Seating is Limited

March 15th, 2008

1. **BUDDY Walk**
   Sponsored by: CNMI Association of Families with Disabilities, CNMI Cancer Association, & First Lady's Vision
   Venue: Pinatang Park to Round House, Rota
   Time: 5:30am – 9:00am
2. **Family Picnic**
   Sponsored by: CNMI Council on Developmental Disabilities & Family Hope Center
   Venue: Round House, Songsong, Rota
   Time: 9:00am – 2:00pm

March 18th, 2008

Self-Advocacy Skills & Resources
Presenter(s): NMPASI: Greg Borja & Tom Thornburg
Venue: Aqua Resort, Saipan
Time: 8:30am - 4:00pm

*****Lunch will be provided *****
Note: Please call the CNMI Council on DD at 664-7000 to register. Seating is Limited

March 26th, 2008

2nd Annual Family Forum & CNMI Service Providers Exhibits
*** For Families & Parents of Children with Developmental Disabilities.**
Venue: Saipan World Resort
Time: 8:30am - 4:00pm

*****Lunch will be provided *****
Note: Please call the CNMI Council on DD at 664-7000 to register. Seating is Limited

March 29th, 2008

1. **BUDDY Walk (Free Vital Sign & Accu Check Screening)**
   Sponsored by: CNMI Association of Families with Disabilities, CNMI Cancer Association, First Lady's Vision, NMC Nursing Club.
   Venue: Garapan Boat Basin (across from Kristo Rai Church, Saipan)
   Time: 6:00am - 8:00am

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Island Snapshots

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IGIA MEETING

From left, Nikolao Pula, acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Insular Affairs; Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne; and Interior Deputy Chief of Staff Doug Domenech during the executive session of the Interagency Task Force held Tuesday in Washington D.C. Kempthorne met with governors and congressional representatives of U.S. island territories to discuss a range of issues, from the planned U.S. military expansion on Guam to health care, educational needs and the application of federal immigration, wage and tax laws in the islands.

From left, Resident Representative Pedro A. Tenorio of the CNMI, Guam Rep. Madeleine Z. Bordallo, American Samoa Gov. Togiola Tulafona, Guam Gov. Felix P. Camacho, and CNMI Gov. Benigno Fitial during Tuesday's executive session of the Interagency Task Force. The meeting was held to discuss federal government-wide support to Guam related to the planned military realignment on the island.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

LOTTE TOUR

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Eun-Soo Ji, Lotte Tour Saipan general manager, looks out from the second floor of the newly opened Lotte Tour Travel agency during Wednesday afternoon's grand opening on Beach Road.

TRAVEL EXPO

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Lou Sanchez, sales manager, Continental Airlines, and Gina Kono, Guam Visitors Bureau marketing officer, pose with the Chamorrita dancers in the Guam booth during the recently concluded TravelTour Expo held at the Mall of Asia SMX in the Philippines last Feb. 15 to 17, 2008.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

IT&E SALE

From left, Rick Umeda, Sumitomo senior manager; John M. Borlas, IT&E president; Jose Ricardo Delgado, PTI president & CEO; acting Guam Gov. Mike Cruz; Mrs. Jennifer Cruz; Ricardo C. Delgado, PTI chairman; Jose D. Perez, IT&E chairman; and Larry P. Knecht, PTI vice president & CFO, after the signing of documents closing the sale of IT&E to PTI on Wednesday in Guam.

MEDIA INTERVIEW

Assistant Attorney General Kevin A. Lynch talks to Japanese media after Kazuyoshi Miura's hearing inside the Superior Court in Susupe Wednesday.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

MHS CULTURAL DAY

Members of the Marianas High School's Refaluwasch Cultural group perform a traditional Carolinian dance number during the school's 21'st Annual Cultural Day celebration Friday last week. The festivity features cultural events, songs, dance, and food from different MHS student organization.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

PERFORMETER

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Frank Crawford of Crawford & Associates CPA presents his firm's "Performeter" report on the CNMI government's financial performance and condition during Tuesday's Rotary Club of Saipan meeting at the Giovanni's Restaurant of the Hyatt Regency Saipan.

MILESTONE

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Baby Heleyna, shown here with proud parents Hazel and Derick dela Santa, turned a month old on Feb 27.

BUDGET HEARING

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Commonwealth Utilities Corp. executive director Anthony C. Guerrero and CUC budget officer Bettina Terlaje review some documents before their presentation during Tuesday afternoon's Senate budget hearing at the Senate chamber on Capital Hill.

Business

GTA donates $5,000 to Relay For Life

TAMUNING, GUAM—GTA TeleGuam donated $5,000 to the American Cancer Society in support of the 2008 Relay For Life. The annual Relay For Life helps to raise funds to support the fight against cancer.

"It is a privilege to be able to assist the American Cancer Society as we fight for a cure for cancer together. GTA TeleGuam is proud to support the American Cancer Society and work together with them as this year's Luminaria sponsor, which is in line with our commitment to be 'Always There!' for the people of Guam," said Marie Mesa, vice president of GTA TeleGuam's People Department.

The Relay For Life event occurs every year and supports the American Cancer Society's National Research initiatives that frequently uncover new forms of cancer treatment. The local support the American Cancer Society receives every year through the Relay For Life event provides resources to present cancer educational programs and patient services to the island community.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
GTA TeleGuam presented a check for $5,000 to the American Cancer Society Relay For Life as this year's Luminaria sponsor. In picture are Glenda Pangelinan, 2008 Relay For Life overall event chairperson, and Roland Certeza, vice president of Sales at GTA TeleGuam.

Glenda Pangelinan, overall event chairperson for the 2008 Relay For Life said, "Our island and our people rely on the American Cancer Society to be there when cancer strikes and with GTA TeleGuam's help we will be able to do more. We are indebted to private companies like GTA TeleGuam and greatly appreciate their assistance."

GTA TeleGuam is Guam's leading full-service telecommunications company providing fixed landline communications to nearly 65,000 business and residential customers, MPULSE™ mobile phone service with advanced GSM technology, BlackBerry®, long-distance and Spyder Broadband Internet service. For more information, visit www.gta.net. ***(GTA)***

Pacific investment group insists on global compliance standards

TAMUNING, Guam—The Board of Governors of the Asia Pacific Association for Fiduciary Studies resolved at the last board meeting in October 2007, to move its members forward by requesting the inclusion of Global Investment Performance Standards in all investment advisor searches.

"The measures we have agreed to introduce safeguard not only our member institutions, but each and every person who has funds invested through one of our member organizations," said Association chair Gerard A. Cruz.

The membership of more than 300 representatives of pension funds, social security funds, endowment funds and individual investors has adopted the board's recommendation.

"To put it simply," said Daniel A. Roland, CIMA, executive director of the Asia Pacific Association for Fiduciary Studies, "GIPS standards are a compliance measurement tool and a safeguard for investors. We really want our membership to understand how GIPS can help them. Anybody who keeps up with recent media stories knows how important these issues are."

"As a first step, the board is asking its members to include GIPS compliance questions in all investment advisor RFPs," he said.

Roland, who represents the association as a representative on the GIPS Executive Committee Investor/Consultant Subcommittee, said the board would from now on—as a matter of policy—increase the delivery of GIPS resources to benefit association members.

The Asia Pacific Association for Fiduciary Studies Ltd. is a non-profit educational and charitable association founded in 2000 for and by, representatives from public and private institutional funds from around the Asia Pacific Region. The goal of APAFS is

Roland

to raise the level of understanding and standards of practice among fiduciaries in the region, so that they might provide the most prudent stewardship of the funds entrusted to their care. APAFS has a wide mix of members representing public funds, endowments and foundations and private sector retirement plans. More information can be found at www.apafs.org or by calling 1 671 687-8823. ***(APAFS)***

Continental orders new planes from Boeing

HOUSTON—Continental Airlines announced Thursday that it has added 27 aircraft to its firm order positions at Boeing, including eight new 777 and 19 new Next-Generation 737aircraft.

The aircraft orders give Continental the flexibility to replace less efficient airplanes and to pursue growth opportunities.

This new order brings Continental's total firm commitments to 111 new Boeing aircraft (25 Boeing 787s, eight Boeing 777s and 78 Boeing 737s) for delivery over the next six years. In addition, Continental has options to purchase a total of 102 additional Boeing aircraft. Continental has taken delivery of five 737NG aircraft this year and plans to take delivery of 27 additional 737NG aircraft by the end of 2008.

International growth

Already operating 20 777 aircraft globally, Continental will use the eight additional aircraft for long-haul international routes, such as the Newark Liberty-Shanghai route that is scheduled to start in 2009. The need for international widebodies is also driven by Continental's commencement of service to London Heathrow next month, which represents the company largest-ever expansion into a single airport in one day. Continental will begin service to Heathrow twice daily from Liberty and twice daily from Houston.

One of the world's most popular and reliable aircraft, the Boeing 737NGs feature advanced technology for greater operational efficiencies. The 19 additional 737NGs, along with other 737NG aircraft already on order, will give Continental the flexibility to continue to grow while replacing less efficient 737 Classic aircraft, such as the company's 737-300 and 737-500 aircraft.

Fuel saving

In addition to investing in new fuel efficient aircraft, Continental continues to enhance its existing fleet with fuel-saving technology. Continental has installed blended winglets on more than 200 mainline aircraft, which reduces drag and lowers emissions, noise and fuel burn by up to 5 percent. Continental was the launch customer for winglets on the Boeing 757-200, 737-900 and 737-500 aircraft types.

Continental has also reduced fuel consumption on its long-range Boeing 777 aircraft by installing advanced-technology 3D Aero Blades on the GE90 engines.

With its focused fleet modernization program, Continental has acquired a natural fuel hedge and an advantage over its competitors. Continental's 737NG aircraft burn 50 percent less fuel per available seat mile compared to competitors who operate DC-9 aircraft and 30 percent less fuel per available seat mile compared to MD80s.

Continental Airlines is the world's fifth largest airline. For more company information, visit continental.com. ***(Continental)***

Guam makes its mark anew at PTAA's TravelTour Expo

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Pictured are PTAA officers presenting an award to GVB representatives Gina Kono, Marketing Officer; Elaine Pangelinan, Marketing Secretary; and Bryan Tayag, GVB Philippines representative.

The Guam Visitors Bureau, led by Marketing Officer Gina Kono and Elaine Pangelinan, received citations once again from the Philippine Travel Agents Association in its recently concluded TravelTour Expo held at the Mall of Asia SMX last Feb. 15 to 17, 2008.

The first award, first place for Most Popular Performance, was presented to GVB for the entertainment numbers of Jimmy Dee and The Chamorritas both at the main stage and at the Guam booth.

A second award was given to GVB for its marketing efforts, third place Best Marketing Efforts (international division) citing its crowd-drawing booth—becoming an annual must-see for the expo attendees.

In 2007, GVB was given the first place award for Best Decorated Booth (International Division) and was also presented the first place award for Best in Marketing Effort" (International Division) in the previous year.

The bureau has attended this travel show for several years now. For the past four years, GVB has collaborated with Continental Airlines to exhibit next to each other that has been very effective in getting more affluent Filipinos to book a trip to Guam during the show. Most visitors to the show were shopping for a destination to visit during the upcoming holy week in mid-March so visitors from the Philippines should be on the upswing then.

Preliminary report indicates approximately 59,000 people visited during the three days the show was held. A total of 174 companies exhibited (tourism offices, airlines and travel agencies).

During the peak months of October to December 2007, tourists from Manila trooped to Guam increasing arrival numbers by 25.3 percent compared to the same quarter in 2006. As of Feb. 17, 2008, visitor arrivals from the Philippines increased by 23.6 percent since the beginning of the year compared to the same period in 2007. ***(GVB)***

Oil spikes above $102, then slips back

NEW YORK (AP)—Crude prices spiked above $102 a barrel for the first time Wednesday, then retreated after the government reported the nation is greased with more oil and gasoline than expected.

Prices nonetheless stayed within range of Tuesday's record close as the dollar tumbled to fresh lows against the euro and U.S. economic worries drove more money into energy futures as a hedge against inflation.

"This is a market that has been trending strongly to the upside, ignoring fundamentals, and focusing on other factors," said Tim Evans, an energy analyst at Citigroup Global Markets. "They are not looking at how oil supply compares with oil demand."

Light, sweet crude for April delivery fell $1.24 to settle at $99.64 on the New York Mercantile Exchange, after surging as high as $102.08 a barrel in electronic trading earlier. On Tuesday, the contract jumped $1.65 to settle at a record $100.88 a barrel.

At the pump, gasoline prices added a penny overnight, rising to an average of $3.152 from $3.142, according to AAA and the Oil Price Information Service. At this time last year, drivers were paying an average of just $2.37 a gallon. Industry observers say prices will likely top last May's peak of $3.23 a gallon as stations begin to switch to more expensive summer-grade fuel.

Office conditions leave room for improvement

By MOLLY SELVIN
(C) 2008, LOS ANGELES TIMES

Forget salaries, expense accounts or keys to the executive washroom. Employee loyalty is won or lost over the cleanliness of the bathrooms and the amount of sticky goo on the carpet.

One in three workers surveyed recently said they had accepted a job—or quit one—because of the most basic working conditions. The respondents' chief complaints by far: the state of the indoor atmosphere, the gripes being about either hot-as-the-tropics heating or Antarctic air conditioning.

Corporate managers searching for new office space think mostly about rent and whether the layout and location will work for their companies, said Johnny Winton, president of Blumberg Capital Partners, which commissioned the survey. "They're not really thinking . . . 'Will my employees be OK working in this environment?'"

Julie Buckner knows what Winton's talking about. The 40-year-old Los Angeles resident is a veteran of what she dubbed "the office temperature wars."

"I always run hot," she said, recalling how she tricked her co-workers at several local public relations firms by surreptitiously powering up the air conditioner.

When her office mates began to shiver, she said, "My M.O. was to tell them, 'you must just be imagining that it's getting colder.' "

Buckner now runs a consulting firm from her guest house, favoring an office decor that includes candles and cut roses. She has one employee, but Buckner's hand rules the thermostat, generally keeping it at 64 to 68 degrees.

Blumberg's survey of 500 workers was the first of its kind, Winton said. The Coral Gables, Fla.-based company develops and manages high-end commercial office buildings in Florida and Texas. "We thought that the office building itself could have some major play" in an employer's ability to attract and keep workers, Winton said.

Apparently it does. More than three quarters of those polled in December said the overall condition of their offices affected how they viewed their employer and whether they were likely to stay in their jobs. And 30 percent said they worried that unhealthy or unsafe conditions in their building might make them sick.

A worker's focus on disagreeable office conditions may be more a symptom of a larger problem than the sole cause for a defection, said Amy Lyman, co-founder of the Great Place to Work Institute, a San Francisco-based consulting company.

People don't quit just because the bathrooms are dirty, she said, but because employers that don't keep the bathrooms clean don't respond to other worker concerns as well.

The bathroom message is that "these are not high-trust environments," she said.

Apart from extreme temperatures, filthy bathrooms were among the most commonly cited problems in the survey, along with outdated furniture or decor, persistent foul smells, leaky ceilings or windows, worn carpeting and rodents or insects.

For employees of some companies, such as Microsoft Corp. and Google Inc., the office is a sprawling complex with manicured outdoor areas, cafeterias with extensive menus, light and airy working spaces, sports complexes, day care and more.

Winton said the survey results should encourage other companies to follow suit—or at least pay more attention to the basics.

Like vermin. Buckner has few fond memories of the down-at-the-heels San Francisco building where she worked in 1996. Much of the building was vacant, or so she thought, until she heard rats scurrying above the acoustic ceiling tiles.

"The tiles were always slightly askew," she recalled, "and every once in a while you could see their foot or tails come through." Her first rat sighting was quite alarming, she said, "but like all things, you get used to it."

Dollar sinks to new low against euro

BERLIN (AP)—The dollar sank Wednesday to its lowest level ever against the euro after markets took comments from the Federal Reserve chairman as a sign that yet more U.S. rate cuts are on the way.

The 15-nation euro topped $1.50 for the first time since its 1999 introduction in Asian trading, then surged after Fed Chairman Ben Bernanke told the House Financial Services Committee that "the economic situation has become distinctly less favorable" since last summer.

That added to sentiment that the Fed is likely to add to recent rate cuts that already have left U.S. interest rates below those in the euro zone.

The euro surged as high as $1.5143 after Bernanke's testimony—well above the $1.4967 it bought in New York late Tuesday. It settled back to $1.5120 in late New York trading Wednesday.

Lower interest rates can jump-start a nation's economy, but can weigh on its currency as traders transfer funds to countries where they can earn higher returns. Worries about the U.S. economy have helped drive down the dollar for months.

Since Bernanke's last similar assessment, the U.S. housing slump has worsened, credit problems have intensified and the job market has deteriorated. Bernanke said those factors combined to make people and businesses alike more cautious toward spending and investment—further weakening the economy.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Fed ready to cut interest rates again

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Federal Reserve is ready to lower interest rates again to brace the wobbly economy even as zooming oil prices spread inflation, Chairman Ben Bernanke signaled to Congress on Wednesday. He is fighting to keep the economy afloat after mighty blows from the housing and credit crises, while trying to contain inflation. For now, the priority is shoring up the economy, Bernanke suggested in an appearance before the House Financial Services Committee. He pledged anew to slice a key interest rate and help the economy, which many fear is on the verge of a recession, if not already in one.

Stocks finish mixed in choppy session

NEW YORK (AP)—Wall Street finished mixed in another seesaw session Wednesday after regulators allowed Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac to buy more mortgages and Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke said the central bank will remain vigilant about the weakened economy. Major indexes initially moved higher before investors cashed in profits, following a pattern set in recent weeks. The Dow Jones industrial average—now up four straight sessions—rose 9.36, or 0.07 percent, to 12,694.28. Broader indexes were narrowly mixed. The Standard & Poor's 500 index fell 1.27, or 0.09 percent, to 1,380.02, and the Nasdaq composite index rose 8.79, or 0.37 percent, to 2,353.78.

House OKs new taxes on big oil companies

WASHINGTON (AP)—The House approved $18 billion in new taxes on the largest oil companies Wednesday as Democrats cited record oil prices and rising gasoline costs in a time of economic troubles. The money collected over 10 years would provide tax breaks for wind, solar and other alternative energy sources and for energy conservation. The legislation, approved 236-182, would cost the five largest oil companies an average of $1.8 billion a year over that period, according an analysis by the House Ways and Means Committee. Those companies earned $123 billion last year. President Bush is expected to veto the legislation if it passes Congress.

Record EU fine for Microsoft

BRUSSELS, Belgium (AP)—The European Union's longest-running fight with Microsoft Corp. neared an end Wednesday as regulators imposed a record $1.3 billion fine on the world's largest software company for failing to fully comply with a 2004 antitrust order. Microsoft has not decided whether to appeal the penalty, which amounts to a fraction of the $14.07 billion it earned in fiscal 2007. In all, the company has been fined just under $2.4 billion by European antitrust regulators over the years. Barring an appeal, the fine shuts the door on an investigation into Microsoft's behavior that was triggered by a 1998 complaint by Sun Microsystems Inc. It alleged Microsoft was refusing to supply information that servers need to work with its market-dominating Windows operating system.

DOLLARS AND SENSE

Saving money a dollar at a time

By DAVID UFFINGTON
C) 2008 KING FEATURES SYND., INC.

The problem with financial-advice books is that most of them are geared toward people who already have plenty of money. There's a new book, however, that advises the average consumer how to squeeze more value out of every dollar: "Living Rich by Spending Smart," by Gregory Karp (FT Press).

Here are some ideas from the book:

■ **Greeting cards**—According to Karp, this is a $7.5 billion a year industry, and we're financing it by sending on the average 30 cards per year. (Personally I think that's a low number, if you add in holiday greetings.) His solution: Buy ahead, buy bulk, buy discount, and reduce how many you send.

■ **Holiday gifts**—Spend no more than 1.5 percent of your gross annual income, even less if you have consumer debt. Do the math: I suspect most people spend considerably more than that 1.5 percent.

■ **Bottled water**—Do a taste test to see if you really can tell the difference between expensive bottled water and what comes out of your tap. Fill an uncovered jug with tap water and another with bottled water and leave in the refrigerator overnight to allow chorine to dissipate from the tap water. Taste. Can you tell the difference?

■ **Saving by association**—You'll find savings opportunities when you join organizations like AARP or AAA on things from eyeglasses to shoes to books and more, all for the price of membership.

■■■

TAX UPDATE: If you're still working on your taxes and if you're using a computer program, be sure to get all the updates for the software. Some changes in the tax laws were made at the very end of 2007. By that time the software companies had already shipped early versions of their products. An online update of the program should get you the correct information on all the forms.

At the same time, if you downloaded forms from the IRS site as recently as Feb. 8, you could have the wrong form or instructions. Go to the IRS site (irs.gov) and put "changes" in the Search box. Look for "Changes to Current Tax Forms, Instructions, and Publications" and "Changes to Tax Laws in 2007" at the top of the list for updated information.

STOCK Portfolio

ASIAN MARKETS

AUSTRALIA
5,734.500
Down 108.000
(-1.85%)

HONG KONG
24,804.65
Up 320.81
(+1.31%)

JAKARTA
2,755.5281
Up 15.39
(+0.56%)

TOKYO
13,904.43
Down 126.87
(-0.90%)

K. LUMPUR
1,376.62
Up 1.19
(+0.09%)

MANILA
3,112.85
Up 7.85
(+0.25%)

SINGAPORE
3,095.46
Up 1.01
(+0.03%)

SEOUL
1,732.37
Up 11.48
(+0.67%)

BANGKOK
837.61
Up 5.57
(+0.67%)

LEADING INDICATORS

DOW
12,694.28
+9.36

NASDAQ
2,353.78
+8.79

S&P
1,380.02
-1.27

MONEY MARKET

Australian Dollar	1.0602
British Pound	0.5041
Canadian Dollar	0.9809
Chinese Renmbi	7.1172
Euro	0.6618
Hong Kong Dollar	7.7842
Indian Rupee	39.745
Indonesian Rupiah	9070
Japanese Yen	106.354
Malaysian Ringgit	3.201
New Zealand Dollar	1.2254
Philippine Peso	40.355
Singapore Dollar	1.3949
South Korean Won	936.8
Swiss Franc	1.063
Taiwan Dollar	30.916
Thailand Baht	29.58

In U.S. dollar terms

Source: Associated Press

Nation

McCain, Obama tilt over al-Qaida in Iraq

AMERISA VOTES

TYLER, Texas (AP)—Republican presidential hopeful John McCain mocked Barack Obama's view of al-Qaida in Iraq, and the Democratic contender responded that GOP policies brought the terrorist group there. The rapid-fire, long-distance exchange Wednesday underscored that the two consider each other likely general election rivals, even though the Democratic contest remains unresolved.

McCain

McCain criticized Obama for saying in Tuesday night's Democratic debate that, after U.S. troops were withdrawn, as president he would act "if al-Qaida is forming a base in Iraq."

"I have some news. Al-Qaida is in Iraq. It's called `al-Qaida in Iraq,'" McCain told a crowd in Tyler, Texas, drawing laughter at Obama's expense. He said Obama's statement was "pretty remarkable,"

Obama quickly answered back while campaigning in Ohio. "I do know that al-Qaida is in Iraq and that's why I have said we should continue to strike al-Qaida targets," he told a rally at Ohio State University in Columbus.

"But I have some news for John McCain," Obama added. "There was no such thing as al-Qaida in Iraq until George Bush and John McCain decided to invade Iraq. ... They took their eye off the people who were responsible for 9/11 and that would be al-Qaida in Afghanistan, that is stronger now than at any time since 2001."

Obama said he intended to withdraw U.S. forces from Iraq "so we actually start going after al-Qaida in Afghanistan and in the hills of Pakistan like we should have been doing in the first place."

While he praised McCain as a war hero and saluted his service to the country, Obama said the Arizona Republican was "tied to the politics of the past. We are about policies of the future."

Noting that McCain likes to tell audiences that he'd follow Osama bin Laden to the "gates of hell" to catch him, Obama taunted: "All he (McCain) has done is to follow George Bush into a misguided war in Iraq."

McCain said he had not watched Tuesday night's Democratic presidential debate but was told of Obama's response when asked if as president he would reserve the right to send U.S. troops back into Iraq to quell an insurrection or civil war.

Obama did not say whether he'd send troops but responded: "As commander in chief, I will always reserve the right to make sure that we are looking out for American interests. And if al-Qaida is forming a base in Iraq, then we will have to act in a way that secures the American homeland and our interests abroad."

On Wednesday, Obama expanded slightly that he "would always reserve the right to go in and strike al-Qaida if they were in Iraq" without detailing what kind of strike that might be—air, ground or both.

Civil rights leader switches to Obama

WASHINGTON (AP)—Civil rights leader John Lewis dropped his support for Hillary Rodham Clinton's presidential bid Wednesday in favor of Barack Obama. Lewis, a Democratic congressman from Atlanta, is the most prominent black leader to defect from Clinton's campaign in the face of near-unanimous black support for Obama in recent voting.

Obama

He also is a superdelegate who gets a vote at this summer's national convention in Denver.

In a written statement, Lewis said Obama's campaign "represents the beginning of a new movement in American political history" and that he wants "to be on the side of the people."

"After taking some time for serious reflection on this issue, I have decided that when I cast my vote as a superdelegate at the Democratic convention, it is my duty ... to express the will of the people," the statement said.

Lewis' endorsement had been a coveted prize among the Democratic candidates thanks to his standing as one of the most prominent civil rights leaders of the 1960s.

Clinton links her fate to economy

ZANESVILLE, Ohio (AP)—Hillary Rodham Clinton spent almost three hours Wednesday trying to persuade a college gym full of Ohioans that her detailed plans to revive the failing economy can also resuscitate her dwindling campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination.

"Obviously, the economy is the No. 1 issue in the country, and it's unbelievably important here in Ohio," said Clinton. "I think, absent any intervening circumstances, the economy will be the domestic driver with all the related issues like health care and energy costs and home foreclosures."

The former first lady said voters in key swing states are beginning to focus on "the big questions," such as bedrock economic issues, that she said will drive both the remaining Democratic nomination contests and the fall general election.

"What's important is we have a lot of people yet to vote," said Clinton. "We've got four states coming up on Tuesday, we've got 16 contests after that."

4 killed in Tennessee apartment

BRISTOL, Tenn. (AP)—A man fatally shot four people at a public housing complex Wednesday, fled the scene and apparently killed himself, police said.

Rumley

Rusty L. Rumley opened fire around noon during a domestic dispute at Edgemont Towers, Bristol police spokeswoman Stephanie Hoskins said. She had no other details on a motive for the shootings.

Four people were shot at the 118-unit, 10-story building, which is operated by the city's public housing authority. Three died at the scene on the eighth floor and the fourth died at Bristol Regional Medical Center.

Details on the victims were not immediately available.

Hoskins said Rumley, 26, fled the scene in his vehicle before crashing it near the Sullivan-Carter county line, about 15 miles southwest of Bristol, which is near the Virginia line.

Mount Carmel School

6th Annual GOLF TOURNAMENT

March 15, 2008

Laolao Bay Golf Resort (West Course)

Registration Time: 6:30 a. m.

Tee Time: 07:30 a. m.

DONATION: $100.00

(Includes Green/Cart fees, prize & banquet.)
Trophies and other gift prizes will be given to top three winners of each category (Championship, Flight A, Flight B, Flight C, Seniors, and Ladies).
Awards and Banquet will be held following the tournament at the Lao Lao Bay Golf Course.
For more information, call Louise Concepcion at 235-1285 or Margaret DelaCruz at 235-1251.

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NATION

Ex-cop spared death in pregnant killing

CANTON, Ohio (AP)—A former police officer was sentenced Wednesday to at least 57 years in prison for killing his pregnant lover and her fetus.

Jurors spared Bobby Cutts Jr. the death penalty on the most serious charge, an aggravated murder count in the death of the fetus. He could spend up to life in prison on those and other charges.

Cutts' attorney Fernando Mack said the defense had achieved a goal of sparing the defendant's life.

"Clearly, that was the objective here," he said.

Assistant Prosecutor Dennis Barr said he was satisfied that the judge ordered the sentences served back to back, giving Cutts the maximum time behind bars.

Cutts, 30, had sobbed on the witness stand when he claimed the death of 26-year-old Jessie Davis from an elbow to the throat last June was an accident during an argument. He said he dumped her body in a park in a panic. He returned to the stand after his conviction to ask jurors to spare his life.

Prosecutors argued that Cutts killed Davis and the nearly full-term girl at her home in northeast Ohio to avoid making child support payments.

The couple's son, Blake, then 2 1/2, was found home alone and gave investigators their first clues to his mother's disappearance when he said, "Mommy's crying. Mommy broke the table. Mommy's in the rug," and later, "Daddy's mad."

For more than a week, Cutts denied knowledge of her whereabouts as thousands searched in the area amid blanket national cable TV coverage. He finally led authorities to the body, wrapped in a comforter.

The victim's mother, Patty Porter, wept as she told the judge she was risking her family's disapproval in asking for Cutts to be freed at some point to share life with his son, now 3.

"I hope and pray I can raise him to forgive you," she told Cutts. "He knows what you did. You would not believe the stories he's told us."

"I do forgive you," she said, drawing tears from members of his family.

Outside the courthouse, Davis' father, Ned Davis, said he hadn't forgiven Cutts.

"He violently murdered my daughter and granddaughter. What would you do?" Davis said. "Mr. and Mrs. Cutts did not raise him to do this, of that I'm sure. Everybody lost today."

For the aggravated murder charge in the death of the unborn baby, the judge accepted the jury's recommendation of life in prison with parole eligibility after 30 years.

The additional years without parole that were tacked on to Cutts' sentence were for charges of murder in Davis' death, abuse of a corpse, burglary and child endangering for leaving Blake Davis alone.

Stark County Common Pleas Judge Charles Brown Jr. rejected a defense request to merge the sentences against Cutts, 30, but he could have allowed parole eligibility earlier.

Cutts, who resigned from the Canton Police Department, was acquitted of a more serious aggravated murder charge in Davis' death.

ACROSS THE NATION

8 wounded in Los Angeles street shooting

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A gunman fired into a crowd of children and adults at a South Los Angeles bus stop Wednesday, wounding eight, authorities said. Three girls, ages 10 to 12, and a woman were in critical condition. The gunman ran away, and streets in the area were shut down as numerous police officers rushed in. The shooting occurred around 3:15 p.m. at Central and Vernon avenues. Two of the victims ran away and were found wounded outside a nearby middle school, police Officer Sara Faden said. The critically wounded were a 10-year-old girl, an 11-year-old girl, a 12-year-old girl and a 49-year-old woman, said Fire Department spokeswoman d'Lisa Davies. A 12-year-old girl, a 14-year-old boy and two men, ages 48 and 68, had minor injuries.

Wis. man gets life in wife's poisoning

KENOSHA, Wis. (AP)—A man who was convicted of poisoning and suffocating his wife was sentenced Wednesday to life in prison without parole. Before she was killed, his wife had written a letter foreshadowing that her death might be suspicious. Mark Jensen, 48, was found guilty last week of first-degree intentional homicide, a crime that carries a mandatory sentence of life in prison. The decision on whether he was eligible for parole was left to the judge. Jensen trembled slightly as the sentence was read but did not cry. Julie Jensen, 40, was found dead in her home in Pleasant Prairie on Dec. 3, 1998, after being sick for a few days. Prosecutors said she was poisoned with antifreeze and then suffocated.

Man who wanted $2K hit on family pleads

BOSTON (AP)—A man who tried to pay a gang member $2,000 to kill his estranged wife, mother-in-law and 9-year-old daughter pleaded guilty Wednesday to murder-for-hire charges in a deal that could send him to federal prison for 12 years. John Orlowski, 49, was charged in May after the plot was uncovered when the mother of the gang member called the FBI. During a change-of-plea hearing in U.S. District Court, Orlowski acknowledged asking Michael Reed, a self-described member of the Crips gang, to kill his family. Reed, who has a lengthy criminal record, was troubled by the plan, especially the thought of killing a child, so he told his mother, according to an affidavit filed by an FBI agent.

Pentagon to probe delays of gear to Iraq

WASHINGTON (AP)—An investigation into allegations the Marine Corps delayed sending blast-resistant trucks to Iraq also will examine whether the Marines were negligent in delivering a laser to divert drivers and people from checkpoints and convoys, according to a memo obtained by The Associated Press. Marines on the front lines sought the tool, known as a Compact High Power Laser Dazzler, but stateside acquisition officials did not deliver it, a civilian Marine Corps official said. A less capable laser was eventually sent, but delays of nearly 18 months may have led to an untold number of Iraqi civilian casualties, according to allegations by the official, an internal critic whose claims are being investigated.

Warren Jeffs pleads not guilty in Ariz.

KINGMAN, Ariz. (AP)—Polygamist sect leader Warren Jeffs entered a not guilty plea Wednesday to sex charges stemming from the arranged marriages of three teenage girls to older men. It was Jeffs' first court appearance in Arizona, where prosecutors filed charges against him even before he faced charges in Utah, where he was convicted last year of rape as an accomplice in the arranged marriage of a 14-year-old girl and her 19-year-old cousin. Jeffs had a slight smile when he walked into the courtroom, and talked in hushed tones with his lawyers. He answered "yes" when Mohave County Superior Court Judge Steven Conn asked if he was Warren Jeffs, but otherwise sat quietly with no expression on his face.

Asia

Plunder case filed vs Arroyo

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Two civic groups filed a complaint of plunder and corruption Wednesday against President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo amid growing calls for her to resign after her husband was implicated in a large-scale bribery scandal.

AP

President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo addresses the crowd during her visit to Trece Martirez city, Cavite province south of Manila Monday Feb. 25, 2008.

Led by former Senate President Jovito Salonga, the nationalist groups Kilosbayan and Bantay Katarungan accused Arroyo of violating ethical standards when she—by her own admission in a radio interview—signed a US$330 million telecommunications contract with Chinese company ZTE Corp. despite being warned of anomalies in the deal the night before.

The complaint was filed at the Office of the Ombudsman, the constitutionally independent body investigating graft and corruption among public officials. Investigators may file charges in court if there is enough evidence.

At least two other criminal complaints have been filed with the ombudsman against Arroyo, but they remain unresolved.

The latest plunder complaint came amid nationally televised Senate testimonies, where former project consultants testified that the president's husband and the country's elections chief—who has since quit—benefited from huge kickbacks linked to the aborted contract.

Arroyo has not directly addressed the allegations against her and her husband but says that she opposes corruption and that her family does no business with the government.

On Wednesday, ZTE denied claims made by engineer Dante Madriaga that it paid US$41 million in bribes to officials.

Testifying on Tuesday, Madriaga introduced himself as a former ZTE consultant and head of the national broadband network project's design team. But ZTE said he "never directly took part in the NBN project operations," and "testified ... on matters he did not participate in."

Thaksin detained on return to Thailand

BANGKOK, Thailand (AP)—Deposed Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra returned Thursday from 17 months in exile to face corruption charges, saying he hopes to restore his reputation. Police took him into custody but a court quickly granted bail, officials said.

Thaksin

Thousands of supporters—many dancing, beating drums and singing—gathered at Suvarnabhumi International Airport for his arrival aboard a Thai Airways flight from Hong Kong.

Thaksin had tears in his eyes as emerged faced supporters. He knelt and touched the ground with his forehead, hands clapsed together in the Thai greeting.

But Thai authorities rapidly detained the 58-year-old billionaire politician and took him to a court appearance. There he was ordered him to post $267,000 in bail pending a hearing on March 12, said court secretary Rakkiat Pattanapong.

Thaksin was deposed in a September 2006 coup and had lived abroad ever since. He had expected to face arrest after arriving on charges of graft and abuse of power during his 2001-2006 time in office.

His return was seen as a test of the country's political stability, with critics warning that the populist billionaire's homecoming could plunge the country into renewed crisis.

Police Lt. Gen. Prung Bunpadung said about 1,000 police were being deployed at the airport, along Thaksin's route of travel and places he is expected to visit during the day.

ASIAN BRIEFS

RP grenade blast kills would-be bomber

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—A grenade exploded during a town fiesta in the southern Philippines, killing a would-be bomber and wounding four people, police said Thursday. The police chief in General Santos city, Senior Superintendent Robert Po, said the grenade held by the bomber went off before he managed to penetrate crowds celebrating the city's foundation anniversary late Wednesday. The blast caused panic among hundreds of people, and Radio DZBB reported that police were questioning some of the injured. Po said investigators were working to determine the bomber's identity and affiliation, but suspected he may have been linked to a notorious extortion gang, the Al-Khobar group.

US, China try to restart N. Korea deal

TOKYO (AP)—Senior U.S. and Chinese diplomats worked Wednesday to lure North Korea back into an international effort to rid the Stalinist state of its nuclear weapons by fine-tuning details of how and when Pyongyang would be rewarded for its actions. The concepts remain preliminary and closely held among a small circle of negotiators, although officials told The Associated Press that one aspect involves setting out a more distinct timetable for Pyongyang to see concrete benefits for completing each phase of the denuclearization process. This could include guarantees of simultaneous action on the part of the United States and its partners such as economic and trade assistance, development aid and diplomatic recognition in return for specific North Korean steps, they said.

Singapore terror suspect escapes

SINGAPORE (AP)—The suspected local leader of a Southeast Asian terrorist network, who allegedly plotted to crash a plane into Singapore's airport, escaped Wednesday from a detention center, authorities said. Mas Selamat Kastari, said to be commander of the Jemaah Islamiyah militant group's Singapore arm, was allegedly involved in plans about seven years ago to attack Singapore targets including the U.S. Embassy, the American Club and government buildings. "Mas Selamat was the leader of the Singapore (Jemaah Islamiyah) network. He walks with a limp and is presently at large," the Home Affairs Ministry said in a statement.

World

Colombian rebels free 4 hostages

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP)—Colombian rebels freed four lawmakers Wednesday after six years of captivity, the guerrillas' second hostage release this year as they seek to persuade the international community to strike them from lists of terrorist groups.

The four former Colombian politicians were reunited with relatives amid tears, hugs and grasped flowers at Caracas' international airport.

"You've given me the opportunity to live again," freed hostage Gloria Polanco said when she was freed in a Colombian jungle clearing, thanking Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez for making the release possible.

The freed captives later met at the presidential palace with Chavez, who gave them a warm welcome next to troops standing at attention.

In a video of the handover, officials who were sent to pick up the four in helicopters walked down a path and spotted the captives awaiting them on a rise. The hostages descended an incline and wept as they hugged those sent for them. Polanco received flowers from a female guerrilla and sobbed "thank you, thank you."

The video of the handover was broadcast by the Caracas-based TV channel Telesur.

Abuse reports at British children's home

ST. MARTIN, Jersey (AP)—Cyril Turner has vivid memories of his time at Haut de la Garenne, a forbidding Victorian-era home for troubled children where a child's skull has been dug up and where police fear they will discover the bones of more young victims.

None of Turner's memories are good: He recalls beatings and a culture of fear that led to an escape attempt that ended in a car crash which landed him in the hospital for a year.

After decades of silence and shame, the truth about the imposing brown stone building overlooking the sea is slowly emerging as victims of suspected abuse speak out.

Turner, 49, is one of at least 150 people who have come forward to complain about physical, mental and sexual abuse they say was committed at the home before it closed in 1986.

Israelis, militants trade deadly strikes

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP)—Israeli aircraft blasted Hamas government offices and metal shops late Wednesday, killing a baby and wounding more than 30 people in a retaliatory strike after a militant rocket killed an Israeli college student.

The bloodshed fed worries about a new outbreak of heavy fighting between the Israeli army and militants in the Gaza Strip.

Hamas claimed responsibility for the deadly rocket attack on the college in the southern Israeli town of Sderot, which came a few hours after two Israeli airstrikes killed seven people in Gaza, including two senior commanders in the Hamas rocket operation.

After nightfall, a third Israeli strike aimed at a rocket squad in northern Gaza killed two youngsters leaving a mosque, Palestinians said. The Israeli military said it carried out the airstrike but had no knowledge of civilians being hit.

Then Israeli planes attacked the office of Hamas Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh and the nearby Interior Ministry, both of which were empty. Haniyeh and other Hamas leaders have been in hiding, fearing Israeli assassination attempts.

Palestinian health officials said a 6-month-old baby was killed by shrapnel in the late-night airstrike in Gaza City and about 30 residents of nearby buildings suffered wounds. A few minutes later, Israeli aircraft hit two metal workshops.

The Israeli military said the targets were command posts at the government building and sites where weapons are made and stored. The military blamed Hamas for setting up such operations in populated areas, and said injuries to Palestinian civilians were unintentional.

In all, militants fired at least 40 rockets at Israel on Wednesday, the military said, many more than the average of daily barrages that have disrupted life in the region. Associated Press pictures showed rockets streaking into the sky from a densely populated area of northern Gaza.

One rocket exploded in a parking lot at Sapir College. Israeli officials said a student, a 47-year-old father of four, was killed by shrapnel that struck his heart. Israeli TV stations showed a second man being carried on a stretcher with wounds to his legs.

The student was the first Israeli killed by a rocket since May, when two people died in separate attacks.

NAT'L UNDERWEAR DAY AP

Models pose for pictures as they gather to celebrate the so-called National Underwear Day held at the bus station of Brasilia, Wednesday, Feb. 27, 2008.

Milan thieves make off with jewels

MILAN, Italy (AP)—Masked thieves drilled a tunnel and broke into a jewelry showroom as employees were preparing for a VIP showing, making off with gold, diamonds and rubies in a brazen daylight heist, the jeweler said.

The bags of jewels stolen Sunday from Damiani—maker of the diamond bracelet that graced Oscar winner Tilda Swinton's wrist—included gold, platinum, diamonds and rubies, though apparently no pearls.

The losses are being inventoried and Damiani is not issuing estimates, but the jeweler's chief executive dismissed a $7.52 million figure cited by the Italian media.

The safe normally would have had even more valuable, one-of-a-kind pieces—but a "significant number" were on loan to stars attending the Oscars Sunday, including Swinton, or in Tokyo for the opening of a new boutique, CEO Guido Damiani said Wednesday.

WORLD BRIEFS

Iraqi council strikes down key law

BAGHDAD (AP)—Iraq's presidential council rejected a plan for new provincial elections and sent the bill back to parliament Wednesday for reworking, a major setback to U.S.-backed efforts to promote national reconciliation. The ruling came despite a reported last-minute telephone call by Vice President Dick Cheney to the main holdout on the three-member panel, which has to sign off on laws passed by the legislature. The White House tried to put its best face on the development, saying "this is democracy at work." The outcome underscored the immense challenges involved in efforts to distribute power among Shiites, Sunni Arabs and Kurds five years after the fall of Saddam Hussein.

New sanctions against Iran likely soon

UNITED NATIONS (AP)—U.N. diplomats say the Security Council will approve new sanctions against Iran for refusing to suspend uranium enrichment. U.S. Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad has said a vote would be scheduled on Friday. But the diplomats said Wednesday that the vote was likely to be delayed until next week to try to get four non-permanent members who have expressed concern about the resolution to back it. The five veto-wielding permanent council members—the U.S., Russia, China, Britain and France—have already agreed on the draft resolution.

UK: Money seized for plot to kill prince

BRIGHTON, England (AP)—A case in which British police seized hundreds of thousands of dollars allegedly meant to finance a plot to kill the Saudi crown prince illustrates the challenges facing efforts to combat terrorist groups, a British security officer said Wednesday. At Britain's first national counterterrorism conference, Detective Superintendent Mark Holmes, head of the country's National Terrorist Financial Investigation Unit, discussed that 2003 incident and other cases to outline the many ways that terrorists fund their operations. The previously reported Saudi case started when officers caught a man as he tried to smuggle more than $330,000 in cash through Heathrow Airport on a flight from the United States to Syria in August 2003, Holmes said.

Racist abuse in S. Africa prompts uproar

CAPE TOWN, South Africa (AP)—A video made by white students showing black university employees duped into eating food that had been urinated on has prompted angry protests and criticism that racism remains entrenched in South Africa. The video, which was made last year and surfaced this week, depicted a mock initiation ceremony into a campus residence, with black cleaners portraying students. They were shown on their knees eating food, but were not told about the urine. Authorities at the University of the Free State said Wednesday they were investigating. Two of the students involved left the university last year and the other two have now been barred from campus.

Medvedev foe plays anti-Semitism card

MOSCOW (AP)—Dmitry Medvedev has faced little public criticism as he coasts toward Russia's presidency. But a fringe extremist group is trying to stir up voters to turn against him in Sunday's election with claims the candidate might have Jewish roots. The bid to tap into Russian anti-Semitism is attracting attention but not many backers, as even other nationalist groups distance themselves from it. Medvedev, a deputy prime minister who enjoys the support of the hugely popular President Vladimir Putin, isn't commenting.

Sudan decries Danes over prophet cartoon

KHARTOUM, Sudan (AP)—President Omar al-Bashir vowed on Wednesday to ban Danes from Sudan and called for a Muslim boycott of Denmark before a crowd of tens of thousands denouncing the country at a government-backed protest against a cartoon satirizing the Prophet Muhammad. The rally outside al-Bashir's palace in Khartoum was the biggest protest in the Muslim world since Danish papers reprinted the cartoon, seen by many Muslims as insulting to their religion's most revered figure. The demonstration raised fears that renewed protests over the cartoon—so far small and scattered—could grow.

Off the Wall

Python eats Australian family dog

BRISBANE, Australia (AP)—A 16-foot python stalked a family dog for days before swallowing the pet whole in front of horrified children in the Australian tropics, animal experts said Wednesday.

The boy and girl, ages 5 and 7, watched as the scrub python devoured their silky terrier-Chihuahua crossbreed Monday at their home near Kuranda in Queensland state.

Stuart Douglas, owner of the Australian Venom Zoo in Kuranda, said scrub pythons typically eat wild animals such as wallabies, a smaller relative of the kangaroo, but sometimes turn to pets in urban areas.

AP

In this photo released by the Australian Venom Zoo, a five-meter (16-foot) python swallows a pet dog whole in Kuranda, Australia, Monday night, Feb. 25, 2008.

"It actively stalked the dog for a number of days," Douglas said.

"The family that owned the dog had actually seen it in the dog's bed, which was a sign it was out to get it," he added.

"They should have called me then, but (the snake) got away and three or four days later, I was called and went around and removed it" after the dog had been killed, Douglas said.

By the time Douglas arrived, all that could be seen of the dog was its hind legs and tail.

The zoo manager, Todd Rose, said pythons squeeze their prey to death before swallowing it whole. The 5-year-old dog would have been suffocated within minutes.

"The lady who was there threw some plastic chairs at the snake, but you've got to remember that this is about 50 kilograms (110 pounds) of aggressive muscle," Rose said.

Removing the half-swallowed dog could have harmed or even killed the python, Rose said, because dogs have sharp teeth and claws that could do the snake internal damage if it were wrenched out.

The snake was still digesting the dog at the zoo Wednesday. It will soon be relocated to the bush, Douglas said.

Ohio school suspends boy over Mohawk

PARMA, Ohio (AP)—A kindergarten student with a freshly spiked Mohawk has been suspended from school. Michelle Barile, the mother of 6-year-old Bryan Ruda, said nothing in the Parma Community School handbook prohibits the haircut, characterized by closely shaved sides with a strip of prominent hair on top. The school said the hair was a distraction for other students.

"I understand they have a dress code. I understand he has a uniform. But this is total discrimination," she said. "They can't tell me how I can cut his hair."

An administrator at the suburban Cleveland charter school first warned Barile last fall that the haircut wasn't acceptable. The school later sent another warning to her reiterating the ban.

Mohawks violate the school's policy on being properly groomed, school Principal Linda Geyer said. Also, the school district's dress code allows school officials to forbid anything that interferes with the conduct of education.

Ruda's hair became a disruption last week when Ruda arrived freshly shorn, Geyer said. Administrators called Barile on Friday telling her to pick Ruda up from school.

"This was his third infraction," Geyer said Tuesday. "We felt that we were being extremely patient."

Rather than request a hearing to appeal the suspension, Barile said she'll enroll him at another school. Changing the hairstyle is not an option, she said.

"It's something that he really likes," Barile said. "When people hear Mohawk, they think it's long, it's spiked, it's crazy looking, and it's really not."

Smash our mailbox? I don't think so

HATLEY, Wis. (AP)—Call this family the mailbox vigilantes. Fed up that their mailbox was smashed four times in two weeks, Greg Fisher and his son set up a middle-of-the-night stakeout to catch the vandals—and it worked. Four teens were caught after a high speed chase.

"We only did this because we felt very violated and targeted by whoever was doing it," said Greg's wife, Kim Fisher.

Greg Fisher and his 18-year-old son, Dustin, took watch at 2 a.m. Sunday and less than an hour later, a pickup truck drove past their rural home and a man with a baseball bat whacked the mailbox again.

"It was frustrating watching someone smash your property," the father said.

Dustin Fisher, who was waiting in a car in the driveway, followed the truck for more than eight miles, sometimes reaching speeds of nearly 100 mph, before he got a partial license plate number.

But it wasn't enough information to find the vehicle in state records. So Greg Fisher and his wife drove through Hatley hours later and spotted the suspects' vehicle parked at a convenience store, the family said. They parked behind it and called police, who arrested three 16-year-olds and a 19-year-old.

Lt. Randy Albert of the Marathon County Sheriff's Department said he doesn't endorse the Fisher family's actions.

"This one ended peacefully, but taking the law into your own hands can have tragic results as well," he said.

Dude, I think we picked the wrong bar

SYDNEY, Australia (AP)—An armed robber picked the wrong target when he raided an Australian bar where a biker gang was holding a meeting. He ended up hog-tied and in a hospital.

The man and an accomplice, wearing ski masks and waving machetes, stormed into a club in a western Sydney suburb shortly before 9 p.m. Wednesday and yelled at patrons to lie down as they tried to rob the cash register, police said Thursday.

About 50 members of the Southern Cross Cruiser Club had just started a club meeting in another room, and the bikers jumped up to intervene.

One robber escaped by leaping over a balcony, while the other tried to flee through a service entrance, the club's president, who identified himself only as "Jester," told Australian Broadcasting Corp.

"We caught him at the fence and crash-tackled him and hog-tied him to the ground and waited for the police to get there," Jester said.

Police confirmed that club patrons had subdued one of the robbers, who was taken to a hospital with minor injuries, but did not give further details. Police captured the other suspect nearby.

Jester said the robbers had walked past the bikers as they entered the bar but apparently failed to notice them, perhaps because the ski masks obscured their vision.

"I don't think he did his homework very well," Jester said of the ringleader. "He picked the wrong night."

OFFBEAT BRIEFS

Oh no. Not you again!

PLAISTOW, N.H. (AP)—Police said the same man tried to rob the same bank, wearing the same clothes and telling employees the same thing on Tuesday as he did two weeks ago. The outcome was not the same. Two weeks ago, the robber got away with cash from the Sovereign Bank branch. On his second attempt, tellers refused to give him money and he took off empty-handed. Police and bank employees said it was the same guy. The robber said he had a gun and demanded money both times. Witnesses told police the man got away in a black Chevrolet Avalanche with New Hampshire license plates that contained the numbers 223.

Police probe possible spork robbery

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP)—Anchorage police have arrested a suspect in an armed robbery. Now they're trying to determine if the weapon involved was a spork—a hybrid of a spoon and fork found at fast-food restaurants. Police said a suspect tried to grab a man's watch on Monday night. The victim said the assailant swung a pocketknife at him but four parallel scratches on the victim's side make police suspect the wound was administered with a spork. Peter Albert, 52, was arrested a few blocks from the scene and charged with robbery. Police said Albert was intoxicated and carrying a small pocketknife as well as a backpack containing a fast food bag and sporks. Albert is being held at the Anchorage jail with bail set at $5,000.

Marshals looking for suspect find gators

DAYTON, Ohio (AP)—Dayton police and U.S. marshals called for backup from animal control when they found two alligators instead of the suspected probation violator they were after. Deputy U.S. Marshal Joshua Hillard said the authorities went to a home Monday morning with an arrest warrant for a man accused of violating his probation in a drug trafficking case. Hillard said people in the house said the suspect wasn't home but invited the officers in. That's when they found the gators, one about 2 feet long and another about 5 feet. Animal control was summoned, and an exotic animal expert arrived to snatch up the reptiles. Hillard said the man was braver than he is. He said authorities also confiscated cocaine tablets, marijuana and a pair of guns. No arrests were made.

NYC man pays hundreds for squirrel homes

NEW YORK (AP)—What may be the cheapest rooms in Manhattan are made especially for squirrels. A self-appointed protector of squirrels has paid to have soft-pine boxes made for the critters and had them placed in trees at City Hall Park. Mark Garvin said he paid a "couple hundred dollars" to have each of the boxes made. The Parks Department installed three at the park. Garvin, a biologist, said he and his wife appointed themselves caretakers of about 60 or so squirrels at the park after 9/11. "That whole park was coated in white dust," he said. "The animals were dying over there, so that's when we really got determined." The Parks Department also maintains refuges for squirrels at other city parks, as well as shelters for animals the agency deems important because they feed on pests. Citywide Parks Ranger Capt. Richard Simon said squirrels have many uses. "Old people like to feed them and the tourists like to see them," he said. "They're just very friendly, and they're cute."

It's Clinton, not Obama. No, it's Obama!

NORRISTOWN, Pa. (AP)—Montgomery County authorities say a man stabbed his brother-in-law during an argument over who should get the Democratic nomination for president. What's more, Jose Ortiz, 28, who's charged with felony assault, is a registered Republican. District Attorney Risa Ferman said Ortiz supports Hillary Clinton and Sean Shurelds supports Barack Obama. She told reporters Monday that the two got into an argument in a Collegeville home Thursday night and Shurelds tried to choke Ortiz. She says Ortiz then stabbed Shurelds in the abdomen. Shurelds was taken to a hospital in critical condition, but is expected to recover.

How did you guys find me so fast?

PORT TOWNSEND, Wash. (AP)—Police arrested a suspect less than half an hour after a bank robbery in Port Townsend thanks to witnesses who pointed to the apartment building a block away where he fled. Police arrested the 40-year-old man in his apartment building Monday and recovered money taken from the Kitsap Bank branch. Sgt. Ed Green says witnesses thought it was odd when they watched the man pull a stocking over his head before the heist. And a half-dozen people pointed to the apartment building and said, "He went there."

Roger that. It's a man on a lawn mower

VANCOUVER, Wash. (AP)—A man led police on a very slow-speed chase, refusing to stop while riding a lawn mower at about 3 mph across a busy street and steering it toward an officer before he was grabbed and arrested, a police report says. Now, authorities say, the question is whether Stephen Ray Castor, 53, already under investigation in the breaking of a window of a man's house and the episode with the officer, can also be charged with drunken driving. State law is silent on whether riding mowers are covered by the law against driving under the influence. Castor remained in the Clark County Jail with bail set at $40,000 pending a court appearance Friday.

Science & Technology

And the winner is...

By MIKE HIMOWITZ
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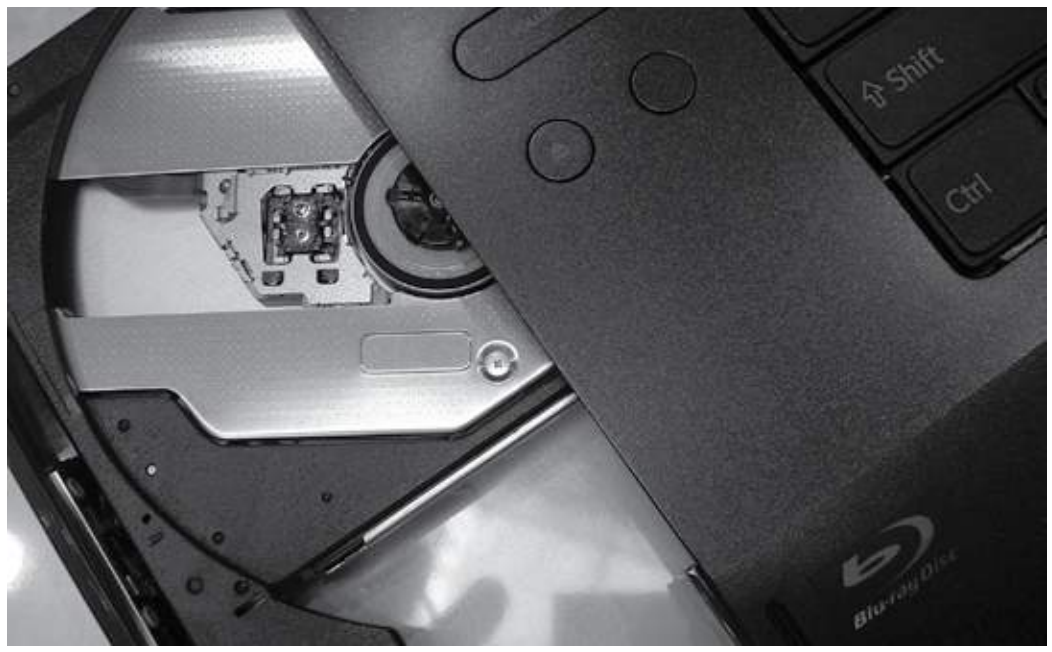


A Sony VAIO Blu-Ray drive.

Here's one good thing about the postmillennial movie-format war: It lasted less than two years, instead of dragging on for a decade like the struggle between VHS and Betamax videotapes of the 1980s.

As a result, there are less than a million "victims" of this conflict. And don't feel too bad about them. They ignored every warning to hold onto their money until a clear winner emerged in this stupid fight over incompatible formats for high-definition movies on disc.

That winner turned out to be Sony and makers of compatible Blu-ray DVD players, along with the customers who bought those players and Blu-ray movie titles. When Toshiba backed out of the market this week, it stranded early adopters who bought its competing HD DVD players and the handful of movie titles issued in HD DVD format over the past year.

Bottom line: I recently found Toshiba HD DVD players offered on eBay for as little as $50, including a half-dozen recent movies—and these were straight sales, no bidding. Luckily, the losers didn't have enough time to amass large collections, which cost far more over time than the players themselves.

Now for the questions I've been getting:

Question: Does the victory of Blu-ray as the format mean it's time to buy a Blu-ray player?

Answer: Not necessarily. In fact, this format war matters far less than the last one, which defined the market for commercial recordings for two decades.

There are two reasons for this. First, the public—young movie fans in particular—seems more interested in getting films online than in buying them on a particular physical medium. Second, cable TV, satellite and fiber-optic providers are working frantically to increase their libraries of high-definition, on-demand videos.

As a result, owning a movie on disc might not be as important as the ability to watch it whenever you want for a few dollars or as part of a subscription service.

Q: Why do I need a high-def DVD player in the first place?

A: Right now, you don't, unless you have an HDTV set and want to buy or rent new titles in a format that takes advantage of your TV's enhanced resolution.

By way of background, the original DVD format—a smash success because everyone in the industry agreed on it ahead of time—provided far better quality than VHS videotape. But it was still designed for normal TV screens with 480 horizontal scan lines. The movies recorded on DVDs were likewise encoded for optimal display on those sets.

But new HDTVs can display up to 1080 scan lines, a technology that provides startling detail and clarity, especially on large screens.

Although HD sets will do their best to display a signal from a standard DVD player, these movies often look worse on HD sets than they did on old-fashioned analog TVs. One solution to this problem is a so-called "up-converting" player—a standard machine designed to provide a better picture on HDTV with traditional DVDs.

These work very well, and for many casual viewers an up-converting player might be enough, especially since they are available for $100 or less.

High-definition DVDs and players were designed to provide the dense HD data stream required to make recorded movies look as good as the best HDTV broadcasts, or even better. In fact, they're spectacular. And these players are the only source of images that take full advantage of the detail in high-end 1080p HDTV sets.

Q: What if I bought an HD DVD player? Am I out of luck?

A: First, like any piece of technology, an HD DVD player will do whatever it was designed to do until the day it breaks down and you can't fix it anymore. So it will play whatever high-def titles you've acquired. But given Toshiba's abject surrender, you won't find many new HD DVD titles coming out, and I wouldn't invest in them at anything but bargain-basement prices.

The good news: Your HD DVD player will still function perfectly well as an up-converting player for your old-fashioned DVD collection. Those old movies will look great on your HDTV set. So don't throw it out. Swallow your pride, wait a few months and buy a Blu-ray when prices come down.

Q: If I buy a Blu-ray player now, can I still use my old DVDs?

A: Absolutely. In fact, most high-definition players (Blu-ray and HD DVD) will do an excellent job of up-converting standard DVD signals on HDTV sets.

Q: Should I buy Blu-ray now, or wait for prices to come down?

A: When I checked the big-box retailers this week, they were charging $400 and up for Blu-ray players in-store, with Sony's entry-level model available online at Wal-mart.com for $374. That compares with $120 or less for a progressive-scan, up-converting standard DVD player.

In fact, the best deal might be a Sony PlayStation 3 game console for $400, which has a built-in Blu-ray DVD player. That will make you a real hero if there are young people in the house.

Otherwise, I would suggest waiting. With more manufacturers jumping on the Blu-ray standard, prices are likely to plummet over the next six months. Also, the Blu-ray standard—which involves all sorts of goodies, including great interactive content—is evolving. Not all of today's machines support all these features. Wait awhile and you'll get a better machine for the money.

If you're a film buff who absolutely has to have new, high-def movies the day they are released—and you don't mind spending extra for a gadget to play them—go right ahead. Now that the fight is over, your investment will be a safe one.

E-mail Himowitz at mike.himowitz@baltsun.com.

Wikileaks case due back in court

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—An effort at damage control has snowballed into a public relations disaster for a Swiss bank seeking to crack down on a renegade Web site for posting classified information about some of its wealthy clients.

Documents from Bank Julius Baer containing information about several bank clients, including San Diego venture capitalist Jonathan Lampitt, were posted last month on Wikileaks.org. The site purports to discourage unethical behavior by corporations and governments by putting leaked documents online.

The Web site claimed the documents showed tax evasion and money laundering schemes at the bank's Cayman Islands branch. Lampitt's lawyer says his client was interviewed and cleared of any wrongdoing by the FBI in 2005 after a former Bank Julius Baer employee allegedly circulated the same documents that appeared on Wikileaks.

The lawyer, Jim Ellis, said he initially received a call from a bank executive alerting him to the Wikileaks posting and saying the leak was the work of the same disgruntled former employee. Ellis was assured the bank would do everything possible to remove the sensitive documents.

In federal court in San Francisco, the bank asked a judge to take down the site. Much to the outrage of free speech advocates and others, the judge did.

But instead of the information disappearing, it rocketed through cyberspace, landing on other Web sites and Wikileaks' own "mirror" sites outside the U.S. The digerati call the online phenomenon of a censorship attempt backfiring into more unwanted publicity the "Streisand effect."

Techdirt Inc. chief executive Mike Masnick coined the term on his popular technology blog after the actress Barbra Streisand's 2003 lawsuit seeking to remove satellite photos of her Malibu house. Those photos are now easily accessible, just like the bank documents.

Masnick said the bank's lawsuit demonstrates the ineffectiveness of such legal actions in the Internet age, when anyone with a computer and online connection can thumb his nose at a judge's ruling and resurrect the "banned" information elsewhere.

"It's a perfect example of the Streisand effect," Masnick said. "This was a really small thing that no one heard about and now it's everywhere and everyone's talking about it."

Cops warn against leaving valuables on seats

By CARL MACGOWAN
(C) 2008, NEWSDAY

Police around the United States Have seen startling increases in thefts of valuables, often electronic equipment such as cell phones and laptop computers, left on car seats by less-than-vigilant owners. The growing popularity of GPS devices is one of the biggest reasons for the increase, police say.

In Montgomery County, Md., a rash of thefts led Montgomery County police to tackle the problem with postcards. Last fall, officers, sometimes working with volunteers, were assigned to look inside parked cars for items that might attract the attention of thieves, said Officer Dana Matthis.

Police wrote down the license plate numbers and notified thousands of owners by mail, urging them to remove valuables from their unattended cars, Matthis said.

Thefts from parked cars dropped from 271 in November to 60 the following month, Matthis said.

"I think it's been very successful," she said of the postcard program.

Matthis said she has seen GPS devices, iPods, compact discs, gym bags and laptops left in cars while patrolling her beat in Bethesda. The area's low crime rate gives people a false sense of security, she said. "Sometimes residents and citizens let their guards down and we have to remind them that crime can occur anywhere," Matthis said.

HELP FILE

By ROB PEGORARO
(c) 2008, The Washington Post

Q. My new Palm Centro won't pair up with the Bluetooth in my Toyota. The phone sees the car, but the car doesn't return the favor.

A. Bluetooth is 10 years old, but phones and car hands-free kits can still have weird communication breakdowns. In this case, the Bluetooth gear in some Toyotas may fail to detect Palm smartphones.

A 2005 Prius had this problem with a new Centro. After going through the pairing process as outlined in the car's manual, the Centro would say it was connected, but the car's info screen would report that it was still connecting. (Oddly enough, a second Centro worked right away.)

Postings in some online forums suggested this extra step: When the vehicle appears in the Palm's "Trusted Devices" screen, usually as "Hands Free," press the menu button and select "Connect." (This screen offers no clue that a menu could exist here — it's a terrible interface.) In my case, the entry for the Prius turned bold on the Centro's screen, and a moment later, the car's screen showed "connected."

■ ■ ■

Q. After I installed the latest update from Apple, iCal showed up blank. Where did my schedules go?

A. The 10.5.2 bug-fix update to Mac OS X Leopard that Apple released last week seems to have a bug of its own: The iCal program included in OS X can seem to lose your calendars and to-do items.

To get them back, quit iCal, switch to the Finder, click the home icon in its left-hand pane and double-click your Library folder. Then double-click the Calendars folder to open that. Drag any files whose names include "Cache" into the trash. When you open iCal again, it should flash a message that it's updating your calendars; a moment later, your appointments and to-dos should reappear.

Life & Style

Exchange student starved while in Egypt

HALLOWELL, Maine (AP)—Jonathan McCullum was in perfect health at 155 pounds when he left last summer to spend the school year as an exchange student in Egypt.

But when he returned home to Maine just four months later, the 5-foot-9 teenager weighed a mere 97 pounds and was so weak that he struggled to carry his baggage or climb a flight of stairs. Doctors said he was at risk for a heart attack.

McCullum says he was denied sufficient food while staying with a family of Coptic Christians, who fast for more than 200 days a year, a regimen unmatched by other Christians.

But he does not view the experience as a culture clash. Rather, he said, it reflected mean and stingy treatment by his host family, whose broken English made it difficult to communicate.

"The weight loss concerned me, but I wanted to stick out the whole year," he said in an interview at his family's home outside Augusta.

Friends and teachers at his English-speaking school in Egypt urged him to change his host family, but he stayed put after being told the other home was in a dangerous neighborhood of Alexandria.

After returning to the U.S., he was hospitalized for nearly two weeks. The 17-year-old has regained about 20 pounds, but his parents say he's not the same boy he was when he left under the auspices of AFS Intercultural Programs.

"He was outgoing, a straight-A student, very athletic. Now, he's less spontaneous and more subdued," said his mother, Elizabeth McCullum, who was shocked when she met her son at the airport on Jan. 9 and saw he had lost one-third his weight.

Jonathan McCullum's parents said the exchange program should have warned them that students placed with Coptic families would be subject to dietary restrictions.

Marlene Baker, communications director at AFS headquarters in New York, declined to discuss McCullum's experience. She referred calls to the program's lawyer in Portland, Patricia Peard, who said she could not comment on McCullum's case because of the potential for a lawsuit.

McCullum said his host family gave him only meager amounts of food, and his condition worsened during the last seven weeks, when the family observed a fast limiting the amount of animal protein he was given.

The host family was a couple with two younger boys and a daughter who was in the U.S. on an AFS exchange. McCullum said the parents gave him the smallest food portions, hid treats in their bedroom and complained that the cost of his upkeep was more than they spent for their daughter when she was home.

The host father, Shaker Hanna, rejected McCullum's story as "a lie," suggesting that he made it up because his parents were hoping to recover some of the money they paid for his stay as compensation.

"The truth is, the boy we hosted for nearly six months was eating for an hour and a half at every meal. The amount of food he ate at each meal was equal to six people," Hanna said. He added that the boy was active, constantly exercising and playing sports.

Hanna, an engineer, said his family went out of its way to prepare special foods, including fish and chicken, for McCullum during the fast periods.

McCullum disputes that. The family served meat early in his stay, he said, but that ended during the fast period.

He said he never got breakfast and his first food of the day usually was a small piece of bread with cucumbers and cheese that he would take to school for lunch. There was a late-afternoon dinner consisting of beans, vegetables and sometimes fish, and a snack of bread later in the evening.

McCullum sometimes bought food, but at one point was reduced to stealing it from a supermarket. He was caught, but the store accepted the small amount of money he had and let him go.

Still, McCullum did not complain to his parents. His father suspects he may have fallen victim to Stockholm syndrome, in which people start to feel a sense of loyalty to those who victimize them.

McCullum's parents first sensed that something was amiss shortly before Christmas, when they got e-mails from their son and one of his teachers about seeking a new host family. They also saw a picture of him on Facebook indicating he had lost a lot of weight.

In early January, the teacher sent another e-mail saying McCullum was "in bad shape" and "really, really NEEDS to go home."

The McCullums said AFS provided false assurances that he had seen a doctor and was in excellent health.

AFS, a nonprofit formerly known as American Field Service, is one of the largest and oldest organizers of student exchanges. Since its founding as an ambulance corps during World War I, the agency has arranged exchanges for 325,000 American and foreign students from more than 50 countries.

The McCullums said AFS discourages parents from telephoning or e-mailing their kids abroad, believing the distraction would run counter to the program's goal of immersing them in local culture.

"They told us to have as little contact as possible, and we bought into it," Elizabeth McCullum said. She said she had confidence in AFS, regarding it as "the gold standard" of exchange programs, but now is aware that things can go terribly wrong.

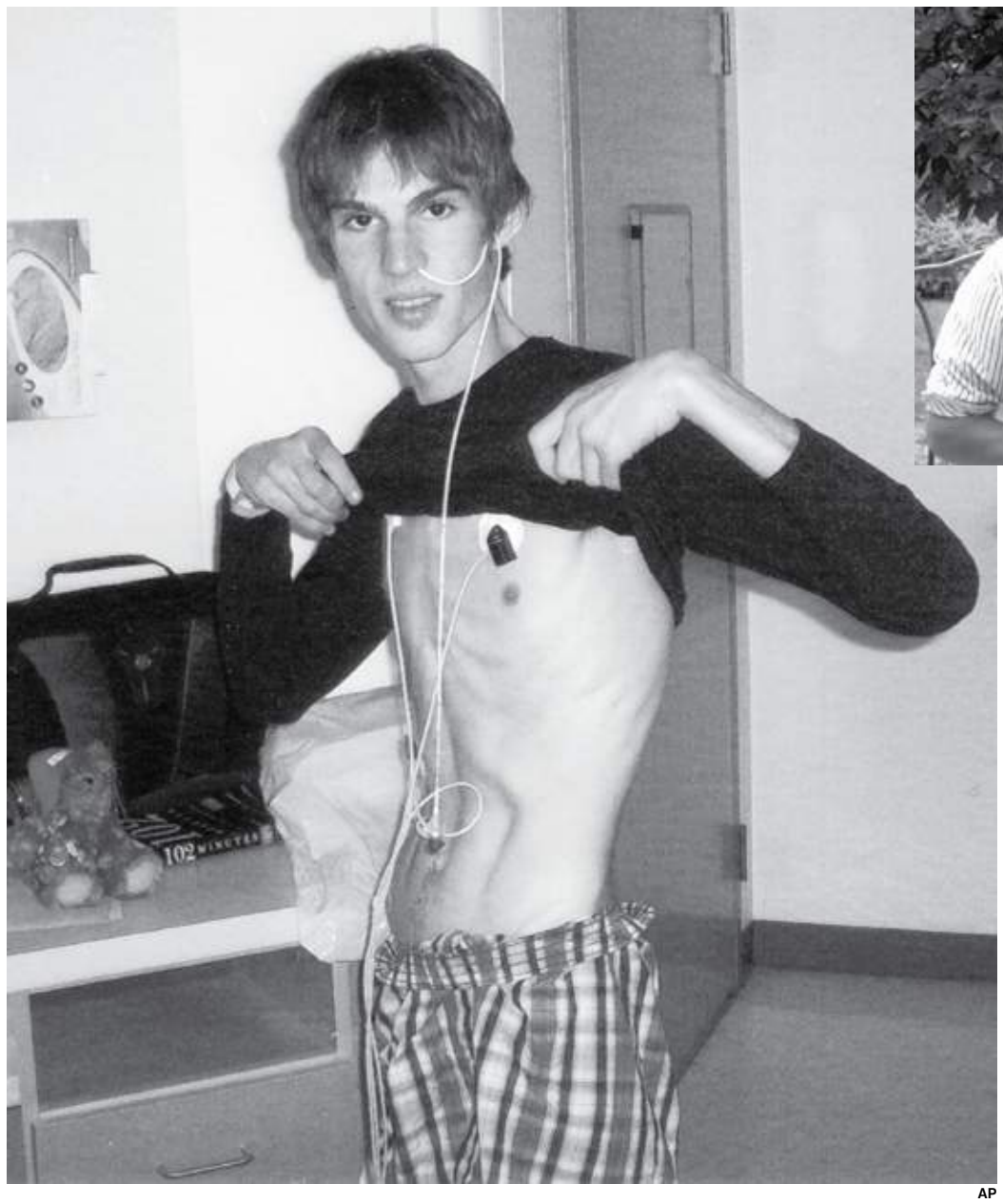
The Committee for Safety of Foreign Exchange Students, a nonprofit advocacy group, said the exchange programs are rampant with instances of abuse and neglect.

"This is not an isolated incident. I'm aghast but I'm not shocked," the committee's director, Danielle Grijalva of Oceanside, Calif., said after hearing McCullum's story.

The McCullums are considering a lawsuit. David McCullum expressed concern about the long-term physical and psychological effects on his son. "Someone needs to be held accountable, and I would like someone to say, 'I'm sorry.'"

Jonathan McCullum is recovering and recently went snowboarding with friends. He plans to return to school in the fall, rejoin the soccer team and eventually study to be a doctor.

Despite the ordeal, he has not soured on foreign travel: He wants to visit Zimbabwe this summer as part of a volunteer program to build homes and trails.



AP

This January 2008 photo provided by the McCullum family shows Jonathan McCullum, of Hallowell, Maine, during his 13-day stay at Barbara Bush Children's Hospital at Maine Medical Center in Portland, Maine.

AP

This August 2007 photo provided by the McCullum family shows Jonathan McCullum, holding his nephew John, 2, in Hallowell, Maine.

Clinton remarks surprises skit writer

NEW YORK (AP)—James Downey knew something odd had happened when he stepped away from watching the Democratic presidential debate on Tuesday night to check on something in the kitchen and his phones started ringing.

Hillary Clinton had cited the "Saturday Night Live" skit Downey had written to complain about her treatment by moderators Brian Williams and Tim Russert.

"In the last several debates I seem to get the first question all the time," she said. "I don't mind. I'll be happy to field it. I just find it curious if anybody saw 'Saturday Night Live,' maybe we should ask Barack if he's comfortable and needs another pillow."

The skit about an Obama-Clinton debate featured a lovestruck press corps fawning over Barack Obama, while treating Clinton as an annoyance in their way. A fictional Campbell Brown fanned herself in excitement after an Obama answer, while a John King impersonator suggested he had "nailed it."

Downey stayed up for the midnight rerun of MSNBC's Tuesday debate just to see what she had said.

"That usually doesn't happen unless it resonates," said Downey, "so that's nice. It's good for the show."

Downey is an original "Saturday Night Live" writer who's also been head writer for David Letterman. He's been back at "SNL" since 2000, when he wrote skits about Bush-Gore debates; and he's been the lead writer at the comedy show on political material since then.

He said it's hard to recall a more dazzling political personality than Obama in his lifetime.

Still, Downey can't help but notice how many people in the news media have been seduced by the Illinois senator. The Clinton campaign has expressed frustration that it is getting a tougher ride from the press.

Clinton has been the first person questioned in six of the past 10 Democratic debates, and some argue this puts her at a disadvantage.

"It's like when the mom is in the grocery store and the kids rush up with this brand new cereal saying `We've got to get it, we've got to get it!'" Downey said. "The mom is the one who is supposed to read the box, check the ingredients. She's not supposed to go, `Oh, my gosh, this is great! It has marshmallows and chocolates and sprinkles."

While he loved getting his work noticed and understands what Clinton must be feeling, Downey said mentioning the skit might not have been her best move.

"It might, on balance, make her look a little whiny," he said. "She might have been better off if other people pointed it out for them."

MSNBC might have also been a source of some of Clinton's annoyance. Both Chris Matthews and David Shuster have apologized over the past months for remarks about the Clinton campaign, which briefly considered backing out of the network-sponsored debate. Tuesday's debate was seen by 7.8 million people, the largest audience in the network's history, according to Nielsen Media Research.

Already, "Saturday Night Live" executive producer Lorne Michaels has ordered Downey to write another skit on the campaign for this weekend's show.

"That's Lorne," Downey said. "He likes to paint you in a corner and if you do it, your reward is to get to jump out of a deeper corner. I pray to God it's my last debate."

BEST SELLERS

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FICTION

The Appeal, by John Grisham (Doubleday: $27.95) A billionaire enlists political help to kill a $41-million jury award over toxic waste dumping.

L.A. Outlaws, by T. Jefferson Parker (Dutton: $25.95) A schoolteacher lives a double life as a thief on L.A.'s mean streets.

7th Heaven, by James Patterson and Maxine Paetro (Little, Brown: $27.99) As fires rage and a politico's son goes missing, Lindsay Boxer tries to quench the flames.

Beautiful Children, by Charles Bock (Random House: $25) A comic book illustrator and his stripper wife search Las Vegas for their 12-year-old son.

Stranger in Paradise, by Robert B. Parker (Putnam: $25.95) A police chief's old foe seeks his help in foiling a murder-for-hire scheme.

People of the Book, by Geraldine Brooks (Viking: $25.95) A rare-books expert traces the history of a priceless Jewish tome to 15th century Spain.

Duma Key, by Stephen King (Scribner: $28) A man takes up painting as therapy, only to discover his canvases have an uncontrollable power over him.

A Thousand Splendid Suns, by Khaled Hosseini (Riverhead: $25.95) Two Afghan women struggle to survive jihad, civil war and Taliban tyranny.

The Senator's Wife, by Sue Miller (Knopf: $24.95) A bride learns from a politician's long-suffering spouse.

World Without End, by Ken Follett (Dutton: $35) Children jockey for power in 14th century England.

NONFICTION

In Defense of Food, by Michael Pollan (Penguin Press: $21.95) A look at dietary sacred cows.

The Secret, by Rhonda Byrne (Beyond Words: $23.95) Life's secrets distilled from oral tradition, literature, religion and philosophy.

The Dangerous Book for Boys, by Conn and Hal Iggulden (HarperCollins: $24.95) Learn how to tie knots, find true north and master other skills.

The Nine, by Jeffrey Toobin (Doubleday: $27.95) The inner workings of the U.S. Supreme Court.

Swimming in a Sea of Death, by David Rieff (Simon & Schuster: $21) Susan Sontag's son writes of her determination to fight a cancer that will kill her.

Become a Better You, by Joel Osteen (Free Press: $25) Change through prayer and good habits.

Heart Stones, by Josie Iselin (Abrams: $9.95) A photographer gathers images of stones symbolizing feelings of passion and wonder.

You: Staying Young, by Michael F. Roizen and Mehmet C. Oz (Free Press: $26) Doctors explain how the body ages and how to counter those effects.

Born Standing Up, by Steve Martin (Scribner: $25) The comedian reflects on the evolution of his art.

Charlatan, by Pope Brock (Crown: $24.95) A prestigious physician takes on a wildly popular medical huckster in the 1920s.

New Eminem book to reveal his thoughts

Eminem

NEW YORK (AP)—Eminem is working on a book that's "every bit as raw and uncensored as the man himself," according to his publisher.

Dutton Books, an imprint of The Penguin Group, announced Wednesday that it would be publishing the best-selling rapper's "The Way I Am" this fall.

"It will be illustrated with never-before-seen photographs of Eminem's home and life along with original drawings," Dutton said in a statement.

The rapper's spokesman, Dennis Dennehy, said the memoir "is still in the process of being written and edited."

The book was described as an intimate look inside the life of Eminem, who has sold tens of millions of records since he made his provocative debut in 1999.

"Offering a window on the star's private thoughts on everything from his music and the trials of fame to his love for his daughter, Hailie, this title is every bit as raw and uncensored as the man himself," Dutton said.

The Grammy and Academy Award-winning rapper has published one other book, "Angry Blonde." The 2002 work detailed his lyrics.

Eminem has not released a new album since 2004's "Encore," and his representative said there's no CD scheduled to be released from the rapper at this time.

Olsen twins working on fashion book

NEW YORK (AP)—The Olsen twins are hoping to spread a little "Influence."

Mark-Kate and Ashley Olsen are working on a coffee table book about fashion, called "Influence," that a division of Penguin Group (USA) will release in the fall.

According to a statement issued Wednesday by Penguin, the book will include "exclusive photographs of Ashley and Mary-Kate from world renowned photographer Rankin, and a wide variety of other never-before-seen materials and interviews from Mary-Kate and Ashley's personal collections."

The Olsens will be writing about such artists and designers as Bob Colacello, Terry Richardson and Jack Pierson.

"Mary-Kate and I have filled `Influence' with the most interesting, challenging, creative people we know - the ones who helped pave the way for us and our generation," Ashley Olsen said in a statement.

"Ashley and I interviewed the people who have inspired us, with the hope that they will inspire and teach others," Mary-Kate Olsen said in a statement.

AP

Twin actresses Mary-Kate, left, and Ashley Olsen pose for the press prior to the presentation of the Spring-Summer 2007 ready to wear collection by British designer John Galliano for French fashion house Dior in Paris, in this Oct. 3, 2006 file photo.

Car-building legend Boyd Coddington dies

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Car-building legend Boyd Coddington, whose testosterone-injected cable TV reality show "American Hot Rod" introduced the nation to the West Coast hot rod guru, has died. He was 63.

Coddington died at Presbyterian Intercommunity Hospital in suburban Whittier at 6:20 a.m. Wednesday. His La Habra office spokeswoman Amanda Curry wouldn't disclose the cause of death.

Coddington, who started building cars when he was 13 and once operated a gas station in Utah, set a standard for his workmanship and creativity, with his popular "Cadzilla" creation considered a design masterpiece. The customized car based on a 1950s Cadillac was built for rocker Billy Gibbons of ZZ Top.

"That was a groundbreaking car. Very cool," said Dick Messer, executive director of the Petersen Automotive Museum in Los Angeles.

"This was your modern era George Barris," Messer said. "He did things to hot rods and customs that weren't being done by anyone else. But the main thing is he designed cars that were drivable."

Coddington was a machinist by trade, working at Disneyland during the day and tinkering with cars in his home garage at night and on weekends. His rolling creations captured the imagination of car-crazy Southern Californians and soon he was building custom cars and making money.

Most often, he customized 1932 Ford "little deuce coupes."

"It was one of those things when a hobby turned into business," Messer said, noting Coddington was also "one of the first guys to get into the custom wheel business."

Wheels by Boyd were fetching $2,000 apiece, which was unheard of two decades ago.

Coddington also surrounded himself with talent. Alumni from his shop include Jesse James and Chip Foose, who went on to open their own shops and star in reality TV shows.

Coddington twice won the Daimler-Chrysler Design Excellence Award and he was inducted into the Grand National Roadster Show Hall of Fame, the National Rod & Custom Museum Hall of Fame and the Route 66 Wall of Fame.

Always dressed in a Hawaiian shirt, Coddington said he loved his "American Hot Rod" Discovery Channel show, which featured ground-up construction of $500,000 hot rods.

"The viewers are ... people who lived in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s and loved these cars. Now, they have money," Coddington told The Associated Press in a 2004 interview.

AP

This undated publicity photo released by The Discovery Channel shows car-building legend Boyd Coddington.

Charles Dickens collection to be sold

NEW YORK (AP)—Rare works by Charles Dickens, including a page from the original manuscript of "Pickwick Papers" and an illustration of the "Oliver Twist" character Bill Sikes, are going on the auction block.

The Kenyon Starling Library of Charles Dickens is expected to fetch more than $2 million when it is sold at Christie's on April 2.

Among the highlights is "The Uncommercial Traveller" (1861), inscribed by Dickens to novelist George Eliot. Its pre-sale estimate is $100,000 to $150,000.

A page from the original manuscript of Dickens' first novel, "Pickwick Papers," containing a comedic scene between Pickwick's valet, Sam Weller, and a gentleman, John Smauker, could sell for $150,000 to $250,000.

The collection also includes a number of original drawings by Dickens illustrators Hablot K. Browne and George Cruikshank. An early Browne illustration is the only drawing from "Pickwick" to appear at auction in at least 30 years, Christie's said. It could bring $15,000 to $20,000. An original Cruikshank sketch of Sikes, the menacing criminal in "Oliver Twist," and his dog could sell for $12,000 to $18,000.

The collection also includes The Daily News No. 1, the liberal newspaper Dickens edited in 1846.

Kenyon Starling, who died in 1983, left his Dickens collection to the family of William E. Self, a collector of English and American literature and film industry executive.

Conservative author Buckley dies at 82

NEW YORK (AP)—William F. Buckley Jr. died at work, in his study. The Cold War had ended long before. A Republican was in the White House. The word "liberal" had been shunned like an ill-mannered guest.

At the end of his 82 years, much of it spent stoking and riding a right-wing wave as an erudite commentator and conservative herald, all of Buckley's dreams seemingly had come true.

"He founded a magazine, wrote over 50 books, influenced the course of political history, had a son, had two grandchildren and sailed across the Atlantic Ocean three times," said his son, novelist Christopher Buckley. "He really didn't leave any stone unturned."

Buckley was found dead in his study Wednesday morning in Stamford, Conn. His son noted Buckley had died "with his boots on, after a lifetime of riding pretty tall in the saddle."

His assistant said Buckley was found by his cook. The cause of death was unknown, but he had been ill with emphysema, she said.

As an editor, columnist, novelist, debater and host of the TV talk show "Firing Line," Buckley worked at a daunting pace, taking as little as 20 minutes to write a column for his magazine, National Review.

Yet on the platform, he was all handsome, reptilian languor, flexing his imposing vocabulary ever so slowly, accenting each point with an arched brow or rolling tongue and savoring an opponent's discomfort with wide-eyed glee.

"There's no `weltschmerz,' or any sadness that permeates my vision," he told The Associated Press during a 2004 interview at his Park Avenue duplex. "There isn't anything I reasonably hoped for that wasn't achieved."

President Bush called Buckley a great political thinker, wit, author and leader. "He influenced a lot of people, including me," the president said. "He captured the imagination of a lot of people."

AP

William F. Buckley, Jr. arrives at Washington National Cathedral to attend the funeral service for former President Ronald Reaganon June 11, 2004 in Washington.

But Buckley was also willing to criticize his own and made no secret of his distaste for at least some of Bush's policies. In a 2006 interview with CBS, he called the Iraq war a failure.

"If you had a European prime minister who experienced what we've experienced, it would be expected that he would retire or resign," Buckley said at the time.

Luck was in the very bones of Buckley, blessed with a leading man's looks, an orator's voice, a satirist's wit and an Ivy League scholar's vocabulary. But before he emerged in the 1950s, few imagined conservatives would rise so high, or so enjoy the heights.

For at least a generation, conservatism had meant the pale austerity of Herbert Hoover, the grim isolationism of Sen. Robert Taft, the snarls and innuendoes of Sen. Joseph McCarthy. Democrats were the party of big spenders and "Happy Days Are Here Again." Republicans settled for respectable cloth coats.

Unlike so many of his peers and predecessors on the right, Buckley wasn't a self-made man prescribing thrift, but a multimillionaire's son who enjoyed wine, sailing and banter and assumed his wishes would be granted. Even historian Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., who labeled Buckley "the scourge of American liberalism," came to appreciate his "wit, his passion for the harpsichord, his human decency, even ... his compulsion to epater the liberals."

Buckley once teased Schlesinger after the historian praised the rise of computers for helping him work more quickly. "Suddenly I was face to face with the flip side of Paradise," Buckley wrote. "That means, doesn't it, that Professor Schlesinger will write more than he would do otherwise?"

Buckley founded the biweekly magazine National Review in 1955, declaring that he proposed to stand "athwart history, yelling `stop' at a time when no one is inclined to do so, or to have much patience with those who urge it."

Conservatives had been outsiders in both mind and spirit, marginalized by a generation of discredited stands—from opposing Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal to the isolationism that preceded the U.S. entry into World War II. Before Buckley, liberals so dominated intellectual thought that critic Lionel Trilling claimed there were "no conservative or reactionary ideas in general circulation."

"Bill could go to the campus with that arch manner of his. And he was exciting and young and conservative," conservative author and columnist George Will told the AP in 2004. "And all of a sudden, conservatism was sexy."

In the 1950s, "conservatism was barely a presence at all," Will said. "To the extent that it was a political presence, it was a blocking faction in Congress."

The National Review was initially behind history, opposing civil rights legislation and once declaring that "the white community in the South is entitled to take such measures as are necessary to prevail."

Buckley also had little use for the music of the counterculture, once calling the Beatles "so unbelievably horrible, so appallingly unmusical, so dogmatically insensitive to the magic of the art, that they qualify as crowned heads of antimusic."

The magazine could do little to prevent Barry Goldwater's landslide defeat in 1964, but as conservatives gained influence, so did Buckley and his magazine. The long rise would peak in 1980, when Buckley's good friend Ronald Reagan was elected president.

"Ronnie valued Bill's counsel throughout his political life, and after Ronnie died, Bill and Pat were there for me in so many ways," Reagan's widow, Nancy Reagan, said Wednesday in a statement.

Buckley's wife, the former Patricia Alden Austin Taylor, died in 2007 at age 80. Christopher is their only child. Buckley is also survived by two brothers and three sisters.

Christopher Buckley remembers his father's one losing adventure, albeit one happily lost. William F. Buckley was the Conservative Party's candidate for mayor of New York in 1965, waging a campaign that was in part a lark—he proposed an elevated bikeway on Second Avenue—but that also reflected a deep distaste for the liberal Republicanism of Mayor John V. Lindsay.

"By this time I realized he wasn't just any other dad," Christopher Buckley told the AP. "I was 13 at the time, and there were mock debates in my fifth grade home room class. And there were people playing him, so that was kind of strange.

"And that's when you get the sense that your dad is not just Ozzie and your parents are not Ozzie and Harriet. But he was a great dad, and he was a great man, and that's not a bad epitaph."

'Penelope': This little piggy's adorable

By DAVID GERMAIN
AP MOVIE WRITER

MOVIE REVIEW

No offense intended, but a pig snout is very becoming on Christina Ricci.

The actress is lovably adorable in the adorably lovable "Penelope," a fairy-tale romance that's a perfect mix of Ricci's oddball sensibilities and her inherent sweetness.

The film further establishes the tremendous range of James McAvoy, proving that the co-star of such heavy dramas as "Atonement" and "The Last King of Scotland" is just as engaging as a leading man in a sunny comedy.

Adding to the fun is producer Reese Witherspoon popping up in a small role and clearly having a blast just hanging in the background as the story of Penelope the pig-faced girl plays out.

You could hardly find a more different role than the one Ricci played in her last release, "Black Snake Moan," in which she spent much of her time chained to a wall by Samuel L. Jackson, who was trying to mend her character's slutty ways.

Like a storybook of old, "Penelope" offers a pithy prologue establishing long-ago events and the repercussions they have in the present.

An ancestor in the patrician Wilhern family gravely wrongs a servant girl, bringing down a gypsy curse that all female heirs to the clan will be born with the face of a pig. The only cure to their affliction: To earn the love of one of their own.

Five generations pass with only male heirs, until Penelope (Ricci) is born to Jessica and Franklin Wilhern (Catherine O'Hara and Richard E. Grant). Horrified by her daughter's appearance, Jessica keeps the girl in hiding until adulthood, when packs of potential suitors that might lift the curse come calling—and just as quickly run screaming at their first glimpse of Penelope's snout.

One such suitor (Simon Woods) goes public with tales of a fanged pig creature at the Wilhern mansion. His story grabs the attention of Lemon (Peter Dinklage), a news photographer whose encounter with the Wilherns years earlier cost him an eye.

Lemon enlists the help of down-on-his-luck aristocrat Max (McAvoy) to pose as a suitor and obtain photos of the monster.

What follows is a smart, funny, endearing twist on "Beauty and the Beast," with Ricci and McAvoy showing boundless charm and chemistry as possible lovers whose secrets run much more than skin deep.

Witherspoon turns up as a saucy, Vespa-driving messenger who befriends Penelope when she goes on a "Red Riding Hood" quest into the big, bad real world. The two short, effervescent actresses could be sisters, Ricci's bubbly manner and intonations reflecting Witherspoon's own girly disposition.

The movie touches on current issues—paparazzi and celebrity culture—but this is a story out of time and place, unfolding in a bubble where a dwarf with an eye patch can stalk a girl with a pig's nose without attracting undue attention.

First-time director Mark Palansky and screenwriter Leslie Caveny, a TV sitcom veteran, spin a breathlessly paced little ditty that doesn't have an empty moment and offers a few pleasant surprises along the way.

One of the best comic actresses ever, O'Hara takes on a part that could have been a flat, tedious mom role but which she turns into a hilarious whirlwind of misguided motherhood. Nicely complementing O'Hara's bluster is Grant's matter-of-fact resignation that he's got a little piggy for a daughter.

AP

In this image released by Summit Entertainment, Christina Ricci, right, who portrays the title role of Penelope, is shown in a scene with James McAvoy in the film, "Penelope"

"Penelope" also shows that filmmakers need to find more uses for Dinklage, the star of 2003's "The Station Agent" who, like O'Hara, takes what could have been a plain old heavy-with-a-heart character and makes him a sympathetic person.

Ricci's Penelope is such a sweetheart—yearning but realistic, cynical but hopeful—that anyone who stuck with her through even the beginnings of a conversation quickly would overlook her snout, which actually is more pug-nosed cute than bestial (Witherspoon rivals her for cuteness in one scene when she goes to a costume party dressed as a bee).

The whole beauty lies within thing is the movie's timeworn message, but it unfolds in such an original and unassuming fashion that "Penelope" feels springtime fresh.

"Penelope," a Summit Entertainment release, is rated PG for thematic elements, some innuendo and language. Running time: 90 minutes. Three and a half stars out of four.

'70s is the go-to decade for comedy

By JAKE COYLEAP
ENTERTAINMENT WRITER

NEW YORK (AP)—Platform shoes, leisure suits, fondue, fro picks. What used to be cool is now the stuff of comedy.

When it comes to period comedies, the '70s are the equivalent of Victorian era costume drama. While serious-minded filmmakers are forever reaching back to the time of royalty clad in waistcoats and dressing gowns, comedians are more likely to cull from the less halcyon days of disco and sideburns.

Will Ferrell is again mining the decade with "Semi-Pro," a movie in theaters Friday about a fictional ABA basketball team, otherwise realistically set in the '70s. Ferrell earlier traveled back to the "Me Decade" for 2004's "Anchorman: The Legend of Ron Burgundy."

"Whenever I look back at old photos and this and that, it just seems like such an alien time," Ferrell said. "The '80s are funny too, and I guess we'll look back and the '90s will be funny too, but the '70s are holding strong."

Ferrell is far from alone. In 2004's "Starsky & Hutch," Ben Stiller and Owen Wilson returned to when a Ford Gran Torino could be an object of obsessive pride. Cameron Crowe's "Almost Famous" (2000) captured the '70s—like many films set in the decade—through music.

"I'm Gonna Git You Sucka" (1988) parodied '70s blaxploitation movies, ground eventually covered in the '60s-oriented "Austin Powers" films, specifically the third installment: "Austin Powers in Goldmember" (2002).

On the tube, the eight seasons of "That '70s Show" proved far more successful than its spinoff, "That '80s Show," which lasted for just a season. Though it takes place in 1980 and 1981, the cult classic series "Freak and Geeks" was largely imbued with '70s culture, like laser light shows and proms with Styx blaring.

"The danger with any period piece, especially of a more recent history, is that it can become cartoony really fast," said "Freaks and Geeks" creator Paul Feig, 45. "The biggest thing on 'Freaks and Geeks' was monitoring up front the costumes and all that. A show like 'That '70s Show' is clearly making fun of those archetypes—and that's fine, that works for that show—but it was a big thing for me to go like, 'No, everyone did not wear leisure suits.'"

Even without the period cliches, the particular vibe of the '70s is especially suited to comedy. If the decades are characterized stereotypically, the '50s were uptight and fearful, the '60s were turbulent and optimistic, and the '80s were crass and commercial. The mood of the '70s is often viewed as a period of cynicism and languor: both innate qualities of comedy.

"Anchorman" director Adam McKay recalls the '70s as a "very bipolar decade" of grim reality and rich fantasy. Vietnam ended in failure, recession and gas shortages spread across the country—all while disco ruled the airwaves and drug-fueled parties raged.

"The reality of the change of the '60s was coming into place, and a lot of the time, it was pretty funny," said McKay. "The '60s were what legitimately brought in a lot of social change, but the '70s is when some of it seeped into the actual day-to-day living patterns of most Americans."

In Richard Linklater's 1993 classic, "Dazed and Confused," the red-haired character Cynthia Dunn (Marissa Ribisi) explores the "every-other-decade theory" on the last day of school in 1976:

"The fifties were boring. The sixties rocked. And the seventies, oh my God, they obviously suck. Come on! Maybe the eighties will be radical."

In an essay, film critic Kent Jones praised "Dazed and Confused" for achieving an accurate "balance between the aggressive and the dreamy" particular to "this odd, floating moment in history, when all decisive gestures seemed strange and suspect."

"There was a melancholy feel to the '70s," said the 40-year-old Ferrell, who nevertheless remembers them fondly. "I was so into the bicentennial. No joke. I bought a Liberty Bell necklace that was pewter. It was like a prized possession."

AP
This undated photo released by DreamWorks Pictures shows Will Ferrell portraying anchorman Ron Burgundy in "Anchorman: The Legend of Ron Burgundy."

Paul Thomas Anderson's "Boogie Nights" (1997) was ultimately a drama, but took much of its comedy from depicting outlandish aspects in the '70s pornography industry. You have Rollergirl (Heather Graham), a kung-fu fanatic (Mark Wahlberg) and a director (Burt Reynolds) worried by a new medium: videotape.

The period details in "Semi-Pro" are considerable: Evel Knievel-style stunts, medallions slung over turtlenecks, tri-colored basketballs and, of course, the expression "jive turkey."

"If it feels like there's a fun way to comment, you find those little moments, otherwise it should fit in the texture of the film," said Ferrell.

In "Anchorman," Ferrell's newsman character, Ron Burgundy, memorably discovers a "new fad": "I believe it's jogging or yogging. It might be a soft 'J.' I'm not sure but apparently you just run for an extended period of time. It's supposed to be wild."

McKay, 39, believes '70s-set comedies remain relevant because of a universal theme of old meeting new—albeit a "new" often ridiculously dressed and grooving to Rush.

"What's the common thread in all of them? In 'Dazed and Confused' the quarterback has the conflict with the old-school football coach," said McKay. "In ('Semi-Pro') it's the ABA verse the uptight NBA. And in 'Anchorman,' you have the new sharp woman journalist against the old guard."

That films set in the '70s continue to proliferate isn't just a coincidence; that's when many of the comedians now currently dominating the scene came of age. It's only natural they would return to what all comedians perpetually contemplate: adolescence.

"I was just starting to have my opinion about what I thought was funny, and trying to be funny," recalled Ferrell. "All those things were happening around that period of time."

McKay, who was reluctant to make "Anchorman" in the '70s because it had been done before, is amazed the '70s—skipped over by everyone else—continue to be such fertile ground for comedians.

"I was shocked to see that it's still continuing," he said. "It's turned out to be a really deep well."

Midler unleashes her 'Most Divine Divine'

By RANDY LEWIS
(C) 2008, LOS ANGELES TIMES

LAS VEGAS—Bette Midler is brash, funny, schmaltzy, surprising, poignant, charming, provocative, witty, bawdy and, of course, divine. She knows where Hollywood keeps its skeletons, and she's not afraid to throw open closet doors and drag out what she finds within. She's an absolute master of the stinging put-down, she can belt a big, brassy ballad second to none, do a bit of hoofing and is a former Academy Award nominee to boot.

So how come nobody ever got Miss M to host the Oscars?

What seems like a match made in heaven remains, at least until Gilbert Cates wises up and drafts her, Hollywood's loss. And now it's Sin City's gain.

Sunday, Midler thanked the capacity crowd "for TiVo-ing the Oscars tonight so you could be here" at the fourth night of her new gig at the Colosseum at Caesars Palace.

She's jumping in with both flippers for a two-year stint in the spot vacated in December by Celine Dion, and for the 4,300-capacity theater, it's truly going to be a whole new day.

Her 90-minute revue, "The Showgirl Must Go On," doesn't differ significantly from her concert act—she covers her hits and gives generous chunks of time to her two main alter egos: Dolores Delago, the wheelchair-propelled singing mermaid, and the deliciously ribald Soph, the world's oldest showgirl.

AP
Bette Midler is jumping in with both flippers for a two-year stint in the spot vacated in December by Celine Dion.

But as with everything in Vegas in general and Caesars Palace in particular, it's now much bigger, shinier and even more over the top, as you'd expect with a reported $10 million budget.

"It's my most divine divine yet," she said at the outset. "I'm a ... goddess!" a statement that neatly crystallizes the merger of spiritual and temporal that makes Midler's performances such a delight.

Her entree into Vegas culture seems like a no-brainer. Yet alongside the kind of shows that have come to dominate the Strip's entertainment scene, such as multiple Cirque du Soleil stagings and their clones ("La Reve") as well as Blue Man Group and baby boomer-minded musicals ("Spamalot"), Midler's revue is a high-energy celebration of, and return to, classic American stage performance.

Although she launched her career in the 1970s, she's always relied heavily on pre-rock traditions: vaudeville-style performance, Borscht Belt comedy and Vegas kitsch, all informed with a liberating rock 'n' roll attitude.

What she pulls off so skillfully is a yin-yang juxtaposition of low comedy and high art.

In her extended, characteristically outrageous skit as Delago, she's now flanked not just by her three deliberately trashy Harlettes backup singers but also by 18 more dancers in the same regalia and matching wheelchairs. (She introduced the chorus line as "the Caesar Salad Girls" and advised "the best thing is that not one of them is a French-Canadian circus performer!")

With hardly a breath after that bit concluded, she reappeared in a simple black dress. Standing behind a scrim with black-and-white images of a decaying big city, she sang John Prine's exquisite portrait of the loneliness that can accompany old age, "Hello in There," which she originally recorded in 1972.

She devoted more time to outrageous humor than musical drama and often jabbed at Vegas conventions, throwing zingers at Toni Braxton's hotel-sized image across the street from Caesars and doing bits with Wayne Newton (his voice, anyway) and Elvis (a not-so-incredible simulation). And noting that the new rotation of big-name talent at the Colosseum (where she plays through March, then takes a break before resuming in June) includes her friends Cher and Elton John, she quipped, "Could it get any gayer?"

Still, with each straightforward song, mostly outwardly syrupy ballads such as "The Rose" and "The Wind Beneath My Wings," Midler extracted something more than what's inherent in each and provided the substance that prevented the lighter bits from turning the show completely frivolous.

She transformed Julie Gold's "From a Distance" into something beyond a plea for everyone on Earth to just get along. In its "Imagine"-like wish for a better world, Midler hit the final word in a line about singing "songs of peace" with a force that decisively drove the political point home. Then she emphasized the spiritual dimension in the yearning-cautionary tone she brought to the lyric "God is watching us"—dimensions you don't expect in a Vegas show.

The 14-piece band, led by musical director Bette Sussman, followed her adroitly from the understated balladry of "Hello in There" to the big-band swing of "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy."

There were surprisingly few opening-week glitches—a faulty parasol in one number, a recalcitrant wind sock in another. The set list isn't flawless yet; her use of Percy Sledge's "When a Man Loves a Woman" makes a problematic lyric even trickier as sung from a woman's perspective. There are a dozen other choices she could make to demonstrate her credibility in a classic soul ballad.

But befitting her self-description as "the people's diva," Midler didn't spend much time fretting the little stuff or trying to conceal how much effort goes into anchoring a show like hers. "If I have to cross this stage once more," she said, huffing and puffing her way across its 200-foot expanse, "I'm going to have a stroke!"

The Family of late

†JOAQUIN JONES CASTRO

wish to remind relatives and friends that the final rosary on Saturday, March 1st. 2008, will be prayed at 4:00 p.m. at St. Jude Church followed by Eucharistic Celebration at 4:30 p.m. Immediately after, we hope you will join us for dinner at the family's residence in Dandan.

Thank you for keeping us in your thoughts and prayers.

May God Bless us all.

Elisa Maratita Castro,
Children and Family

"Come to me all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and My burden is light"

Matthew 11:28-30

'Kidz Bop,' Cagle crack top 10

By TODD MARTENS
(C) 2008, LOS ANGELES TIMES

After last week's Grammy-inspired sales bump on the pop sales chart, all is relatively calm this week, as Jack Johnson, Alicia Keys and Amy Winehouse remain at the top. Most eyes will be on next week's chart, when releases from Janet Jackson, Dolly Parton and Erykah Badu will enter.

There are two newcomers in this week's Top 10, led by the latest in the "Kidz Bop" compilation series. The 13th edition of the franchise, in which popular tunes are remade in a kid-friendly format, arrives at No. 4 after selling 48,000 copies.

Meanwhile, Chris Cagle lands at No. 8 with "My Life's Been a Country Song," which made the Top 10 despite selling a scant 37,000 copies.

In fact, the only album that sold more than 100,000 copies was Johnson's "Sleep Through the Static," which holds its No. 1 post despite a 42 percent sales drop to 105,000 copies.

In its three weeks, the title has sold about 660,000 copies.

Taking full advantage of a weak release week is singer-songwriter Sara Bareilles. Her "Little Voice" jumps up the chart 14 spots to No. 7, on a 9 percent sales increase to 37,000 copies. Bareilles is benefiting from a television commercial for online music service Rhapsody promoting her single "Love Song."

Overall, Billboard reported that the most recent week's sales were down 18.5 percent from the same week last year.

Bill Cosby to host Playboy Jazz Festival

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The annual Playboy Jazz Festival turns 30 this year with Bill Cosby reprising his longtime role as master of ceremonies at the Hollywood Bowl.

Herbie Hancock, who won album of the year at the Grammys, will be part of a two-day lineup that ranges from Al Jarreau, Poncho Sanchez and Keb' Mo' to Dr. John and Dee Dee Bridgewater, among others.

The June 14-15 festival will bring back Cosby, who has missed only three turns as host since the first presentation in Los Angeles in 1979.

Cosby said he doesn't know how the festival became an institution, but he's effusive about the experience of what he calls "two days of neighborly, happy people" at a huge, eclectic, listening party.

"Playboy is Hollywood Bowl, 18,000 people and the umbrella under jazz - the umbrella has about whatever the new style (of) music that's popular on the radio, that's quote-unquote close enough for jazz. And then, of course, we have our traditional musicians and blues," he told The Associated Press on Wednesday.

"So it's everything," he added, "but I think it's the sunshine, it's starting 2:30 in the afternoon, moving on to 10:30 at night. It builds as the evening goes on."

Cosby said he particularly enjoys when the crowd becomes "naughty" and forms the festival's famed conga lines.

"That always makes me laugh because in the conga line you have this amalgamation ... you got people who should be followed with a defibrillator and then there are the younger people who are just having a wild time," he said.

AP

Bill Cosby, perennial host of the Playboy Jazz Festival, right, and Playboy impresario Hugh Hefner greet each other at a party to announce the lineup of the upcoming 30th annual festival, at the Playboy Mansion in Los Angeles Wednesday, Feb. 27, 2008.

Miles, who recorded with Hendrix, dies

AUSTIN (AP)—Drummer Buddy Miles, who played with Jimi Hendrix and sang in the claymation commercials featuring the California Raisins in the 1980s, has died. He was 60.

Miles, who had been suffering from congestive heart failure, died Tuesday night in Austin, publicist Duane Lee said.

"He loved to laugh," Lee told The Associated Press on Wednesday night. "We spent more time laughing than anything else. He was a great joke teller."

Miles, who was born in Omaha, Neb., was performing with his father's jazz-influenced combo by the age 11. He then went on to play for The Delfonics, The Ink Spots and Wilson Pickett, according to his Web site.

He co-founded the band Electric Flag in 1967. He also co-founded the Band of Gypsys with Hendrix and Billy Cox, the Web site said.

Miles was drummer on Hendrix's landmark "Electric Ladyland" album before officially joining Band of Gypsys a few months later. Miles is best known for "Them Changes," a song he wrote and performed.

According to Miles' Web site, those he performed with included Stevie Wonder, Muddy Waters, Barry White, David Bowie, George Clinton, Santana and Bootsy Collins.

"You name it, he sat in with them," longtime friend Victoria Rose told the Omaha World-Herald.

Omaha musician Craig Balderston remembers jamming with Miles occasionally during the mid-90s.

"He would sit in and sing with us. He was a fantastic drummer and a fantastic singer," Balderston told the newspaper.

Guggenheim director to step down

NEW YORK (AP)—The director of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation is planning to step down.

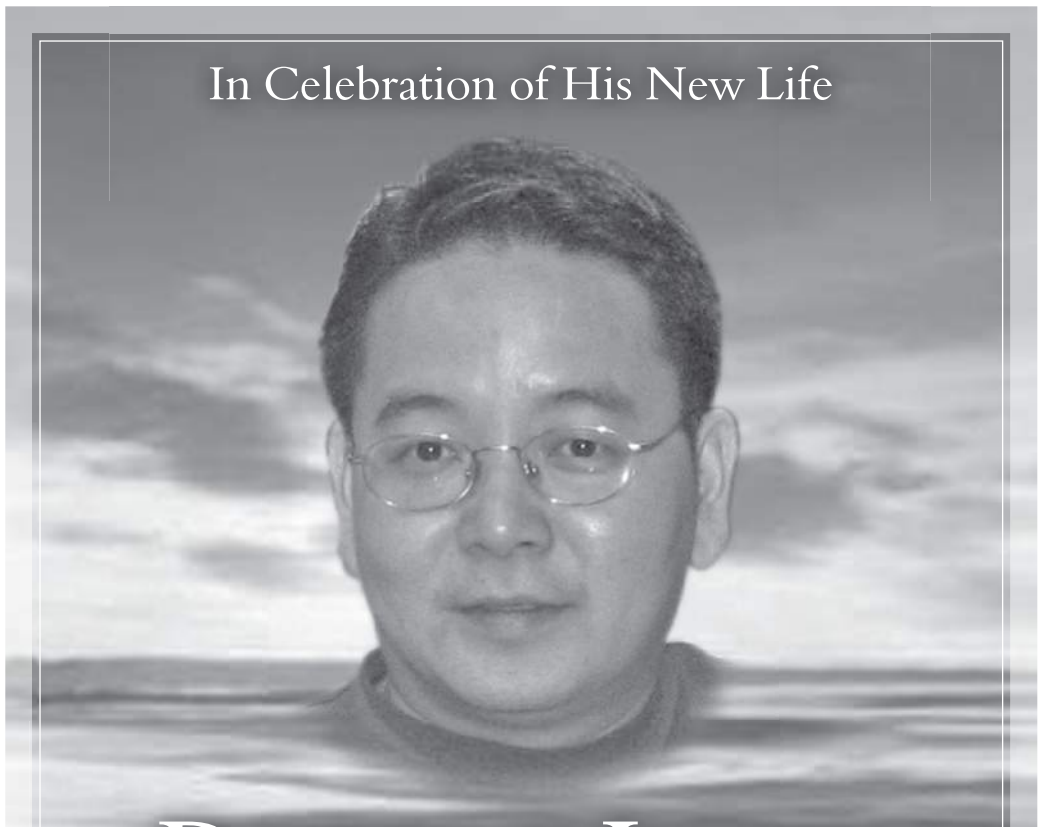
The foundation's board says Wednesday that Thomas Krens will remain at the foundation as a senior adviser for international affairs and oversee the creation of a Frank Gehry-designed museum in the United Arab Emirates.

Krens has been at the Guggenheim nearly 20 years. The foundation says he will remain director until a successor is hired.

The new director will run the Manhattan flagship museum and Guggenheim satellites including those in Venice, Italy; Berlin; Bilbao, Spain; and Las Vegas.

Krens's directorship has seen two multimillion-dollar restoration projects at the Guggenheim's landmark Frank Lloyd Wright building on Fifth Avenue.

In Celebration of His New Life



†ROBERT INGEL

October 19, 1967 – February 24, 2008

from Manila, Philippines was called home by God at the age of 40

Nightly rosary is being offered at 7:30 P.M. at San Jose Catholic Church in San Jose, behind Downtown Market.

Final viewing and last respects will be held on Friday, February 29th, at San Jose Catholic Church beginning at 12:00 noon until 2:00 P.M. Mass will follow immediately.

Naomi Campbell remains hospitalized

SAO PAULO, Brazil (AP) —British supermodel Naomi Campbell spent a second day recuperating in a Brazilian hospital Wednesday after doctors removed a cyst.

"We have been instructed to not release any information regarding Naomi," a Sirio Libanes Hospital spokeswoman said on condition of anonymity in line with hospital policy. "All I can tell you is that she is still at the hospital and that she is recovering very nicely."

Neither the spokeswoman nor Campbell's publicist, Jeff Raymond, knew how long she would remain there.

Campbell, a frequent visitor to Brazil who earlier this month celebrated Carnival in the northeastern city of Salvador, was admitted in recent days to the Sao Paulo facility.

Gynecologist Jose Aristodemo Pinotti described the procedure as a laparoscopy, in which doctors use a thin, lighted scope to view internal organs.

On Tuesday, the day after the surgery, Pinotti said Campbell was "completely cured and walking in her room."

The supermodel also was being cared for by David Uip, one of Brazil's leading experts in the treatment of infectious diseases, the hospital said.

AP

British model Naomi Campbell poses during a press conference at the "Berlin Fashion Week" in Berlin in this Jan. 28, 2008, file photo.

Police reviewing alleged Spears drugging

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Los Angeles police say they are looking into allegations that someone drugged Britney Spears but have not decided whether to open a formal investigation.

Police Capt. Kyle Jackon said in a statement Wednesday that the allegations "are being considered" by the Robbery-Homicide unit to determine if laws have been violated.

Jackson says no suspect has been identified.

Spears' mother claimed in recent court papers that the pop star's sometime companion Sam Lutfi drugged Spears and tried to take control of her life. Those claims led to a restraining order against Lutfi.

Spears is currently under a court-ordered conservatorship.

AP

Singer Britney Spears poses on the press line at the Scandinavian Style Mansion party in Los Angeles in this Dec. 1, 2007 file photo.

3 nights of 'Idol' beat 1 Oscars night

NEW YORK (AP)—The math is simple: three nights of "American Idol" beats one night of the Academy Awards.

Fox dominated the television ratings again behind its hit competition, which was seen by roughly 29 million people on both Tuesday and Wednesday last week. A special Thursday edition had more than 23 million viewers, according to Nielsen Media Research.

Meanwhile, ABC didn't get quite the usual boost from the Academy Awards. The 32 million people who watched Sunday's show was the smallest Oscars audience since Nielsen began keeping those records in 1974.

The traditional Barbara Walters interview special had fewer than 12 million viewers, Nielsen said.

The cable network Spike counterprogrammed the Oscars with an original Steven Seagal movie, "Urban Justice." Its 1.7 million viewers, mostly men, represented Spike's biggest audience for an original movie.

ABC, which finished second in the ratings behind Fox last week, may have done better if not for the horrid performance of some of its new original shows. "October Road," "Cashmere Mafia" and "Carpoolers" each got fewer than 5 million viewers—or fewer than Univision's audience for the telenovela "Al Diablo Con Guapos" on four separate nights.

Fox averaged 15 million prime-time viewers last week (8.6 rating, 14 share), while ABC had 9.9 million (6.1, 10). CBS had 7.9 million (5.1, 8), NBC 7.2 million (4.6, 7), the CW 2.4 million (1.6, 2), My Network TV 1.2 million (0.8, 1) and ION Television 530,000 (0.4, 1).

Among the Spanish-language networks, Univision averaged 3.9 million (1.9 rating, 3 share), Telemundo had 1.2 million (0.6, 1), TeleFutura 690,000 (0.4, 1) and Azteca 150,000 (0.1, 0).

AP

In this photo provided by Fox, Carly Smithson performs in front of the judges on American Idol.

NBC's "Nightly News" won the evening news ratings race, averaging 9.6 million viewers (6.5 rating, 12 share). ABC's "World News" had 9.2 million viewers (6.2, 12) and the "CBS Evening News" 7.1 million (4.7, 9).

A ratings point represents 1,128,000 households, or 1 percent of the nation's estimated 112.8 million TV homes. The share is the percentage of in-use televisions tuned to a given show.

For the week of Feb. 18-24, the top 10 shows, their networks and viewerships: "Academy Awards," ABC, 32.01 million; "American Idol" (Tuesday), Fox, 29.01 million; "American Idol" (Wednesday), Fox, 28.89 million; "American Idol" (Thursday), Fox, 23.37 million; "Oscar's Red Carpet 2008," ABC, 21.54 million; "Deal or No Deal" (Monday), NBC, 16.95 million; "Lost," ABC, 13.65 million; "Survivor: Micronesia," CBS, 12.66 million; "Two and a Half Men," CBS, 12.45 million; "Don't Forget the Lyrics," Fox, 12.43 million.

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Semi-Pro

Friday		4:25	7:30	9:35
Saturday	1:25	4:25	7:30	9:35
Sunday	1:25	4:25	7:30	
Mon thru Thurs		4:25	7:30	

Will Ferrell, Woody Harrelson
Comedy, Sports • Rated R

Synopsis

In 1976, the maverick ABA is a fast-paced, wild and crazy basketball league that rivals the NBA and makes a name for itself with innovations like the three-point shot and slam dunk contest. Jackie Moon is a one-hit wonder who used the profits from the success of his chart-topping song "Love Me Sexy" to achieve his dream of owning a basketball team. But Moon"s franchise, the Flint Michigan Tropics, is the worst team in the league and in danger of folding when the ABA announces its plans to merge with the NBA.

Bahay Kubo

Friday		4:20	7:10	9:50
Saturday	1:15	4:20	7:10	9:50
Sunday	1:15	4:20	7:10	
Mon thru Thurs		4:20	7:10	

Maricel Soriano, Eric Quizon
Comedy, Drama • Rated NR

Synopsis

The story revolves around the life of Eden Manahan (Maricel Soriano) as she constantly struggles to maintain her family together as well as her relationship with her husband Perry (Eric Santos), best friend Marang (Eugene Domingo) and with her mother Ida (Gloria Romero). Eden has brought up a family in which most of them are adopted children, wherein all her daughters are named after flowers.

★ ★ ★

Vantage Point

Friday		4:15	7:00	9:45
Saturday	1:10	4:15	7:00	9:45
Sunday	1:10	4:15	7:00	
Mon thru Thurs		4:15	7:00	

Dennis Quaid, Forest Whitaker
Drama, Thriller • Rated PG13

Synopsis

Thomas Barnes and Kent Taylor are two Secret Service agents assigned to protect President Ashton at a landmark summit on the global war on terror. When President Ashton is shot moments after his arrival in Spain, chaos ensues and disparate lives collide. In the crowd is Howard Lewis, an American tourist videotaping the historic event to show his kids when he returns home. Also there is Rex, an American TV news producer who is reporting on the conference.

The Spiderwick Chronicles

Friday		4:00	7:20	9:30
Saturday	1:00	4:00	7:20	9:30
Sunday	1:00	4:00	7:20	
Mon thru Thurs		4:00	7:20	

Seth Rogen, Mary-Loise Parker
Fantasy, Children • Rated PG13

Untraceable

Friday		4:30	7:05	9:55
Saturday	1:30	4:30	7:05	9:55
Sunday	1:30	4:30	7:05	
Mon thru Thurs		4:30	7:05	

Diane Lane, Billy Burke
Drama, Thriller, Crime • Rated R

Fool's Gold

Friday		4:10	7:15	10:00
Saturday	1:20	4:10	7:15	10:00
Sunday	1:20	4:10	7:15	
Mon thru Thurs		4:10	7:15	

Matthew McConaughey, Kate Hudson
Action, Adventure • Rated PG13

Jumper

Friday		4:05	7:25	9:40
Saturday	1:05	4:05	7:25	9:40
Sunday	1:05	4:05	7:25	
Mon thru Thurs		4:05	7:25	

Hayden Christensen, Samuel L. Jackson
Adventure, Sci-Fi • Rated PG13

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Whoopi Goldberg accepts Oscar apology

AP

This photo released by ABC, shows Whoopi Goldberg on ABC's talk show "The View," in this Sept. 4, 2007, file photo in New York.

NEW YORK (AP)—Whoopi Goldberg has accepted an apology from producer Gil Cates for not including her in a montage featuring Oscar hosts during Sunday's Academy Awards telecast. Cates called her Tuesday and "talked about the fact that he had made an oversight, pure and simple.

He said, 'You know I love you,'" Goldberg said Wednesday on ABC daytime talk show "The View."

Goldberg, who called Cates a "great gentleman," accepted his apology.

She said she has "moved on" since choking up on Monday's show when her fellow co-hosts discussed how she was left out of the clip.

The 52-year-old actress-comedian hosted the Oscars in 1994, 1996, 1999 and 2002.

Norway court postpones Amy Winehouse hearing

BERGEN, Norway (AP)—A Norwegian court has postponed a hearing for Amy Winehouse, who is accused of drug possession.

The British singer-songwriter and her husband, Blake Fielder-Civil, were arrested in the western city of Bergen last October. They were held overnight on charges of possessing 1/4 ounce of marijuana and released the next morning after paying fines of $715 each.

Winehouse later appealed the fine, claiming Norwegian police made mistakes in the case.

The tattooed songstress was due in court Friday to contest the fine, but the Bergen district court approved a request by her lawyer to reschedule the hearing, Norwegian news agency NTB reported Wednesday.

The Bergen court postponed the hearing because Fielder-Civil is scheduled to appear in a separate court hearing Friday in Britain, the news agency reported.

Winehouse, 24, won five Grammy Awards earlier this month, including best record ("Rehab"), best song ("Rehab") and best new artist.

AP

British singer Amy Winehouse performs at the Brit Awards 2008 in London, in this Feb. 20, 2008, file photo.

Judge: Ja Rule can't post pals' bail

NEW YORK (AP)—A judge in New York says Ja Rule can't post bail for co-defendants in a gun possession case—and she wants the duo to come up with their own money.

Ja Rule

State Supreme Court Justice Micki Scherer said Wednesday the rapper "put himself in the position of perhaps controlling the outcome of the case" by posting thousands of dollars in bail for the co-defendants.

"I think the potential for it is a big problem," Scherer said.

Ja Rule's lawyer said the defense will come up with separate bail packages for co-defendants Dennis Cherry and Mohamed Gamal.

Late author honored with Brooklyn tree

NEW YORK (AP)—Another tree will soon grow in Brooklyn.

New York's parks department plans to plant a serviceberry tree outside the Brooklyn Public Library branch believed to be the inspiration for the one in the 1943 novel "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn."

The novel's author was Brooklyn-born Betty Smith. She'll be honored at the Leonard Branch on Thursday. Smith's daughter is scheduled to speak at the ceremony about her mother, who died in 1972.

"A Tree Grows in Brooklyn" is about a girl's childhood in a poor neighborhood. It has sold millions of copies and has been made into a movie.

The small flowering and berry-producing tree will be planted later this year as part of the parks department's goal to plant a million trees by 2017.

Simpson to perform at concert for troops

NEW YORK (AP)—Jessica Simpson will join rock act Disturbed and comedian Carlos Mencia in Kuwait during a concert for U.S troops next month. The event, to be held March 10, is set to be broadcast live on the social networking site MySpace.com.

"It's truly an honor to perform for the troops," Simpson said in a statement. "Through Operation MySpace, I get to serve my country by doing what I love to do in front of thousands of brave men in uniform. It's every girl's dream!"

Singer-actress Jessica Simpson is shown in this Nov. 5, 2007, file photo in New York. AP

Other acts are expected to be added to the bill, which also includes Filter and DJ Z-Trip.

"For years troops stationed all over the world have utilized MySpace as a lifeline to communicate with their loved ones back home," said MySpace's co-founder, Tom Anderson. "Many of them have been generous enough to share their unique experiences with me through messages on MySpace. I'm thrilled to have the opportunity to thank them in person and bring along the entire MySpace community."

An abbreviated version of the concert is set to air April 12 on the cable network FX.

Girl's poem urges restraint before rushing to judgment

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: I am a 12-year-old freshman at an all-girls school. Prior to this I was in the public school system. Today I was thinking about my experiences in both systems of schools, which inspired me to write the following poem. You can print it if you like.

Perhaps it will strike a chord with educators and students. Maybe it won't. But I wanted to get my feelings out on this subject and help to stop unfair judgment.

—LEALIA XIONG, GUILFORD, CONN.

DEAR LEALIA: I'm pleased to share your poem and the important message it so succinctly conveys. You have tremendous insight for one so young, and talent as well.

DON'T JUDGE
Don't judge people you hardly know.
You don't know what their day has been like.
You don't know what their life has been like.
Don't judge.
Don't judge someone who seems
As if she's overreacting.
You don't know if she's lost someone
She loved dearly
Or if her parents are getting a divorce
Or fighting over nothing.
Don't judge.
Don't judge someone who's different.
He's probably one of the nicest people you'll know.
Or the funniest.
Or the smartest.
Take the time to get to know people.
Walk with them.
Run with them.
Share their triumphs and their sorrows.
Maybe they don't dance through life
As you thought.
Don't judge.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I am a stay-at-home mom of an active 3-year-old boy, with another on the way. Before my son, "Chad," was born, my husband and I took in a loving yellow Labrador, "Sparky" (now 8), who had been neglected.

While I love Sparky very much, he is just too much work for me because he is so needy. He often becomes nervous and "stuck" in certain rooms and must be physically coaxed into the next room. His anxiety causes him to bark uncontrollably at cars, people walking by, etc. He is absolutely out of control when someone comes to the door. He has damaged our home, wakes us up when we're sleeping, wants to go in and out all day, and is constantly underfoot. Our efforts to train Sparky have failed, and I'm simply out of patience.

The trouble is, my husband has no sympathy for the difficulty this causes me when I'm home during the day, and he refuses to discuss alternative options. I don't know what to do and have overwhelming feelings of guilt. I find myself actually looking forward to the day when Sparky dies so that I can be relieved of this burden. Please help.

—DOG TIRED, PALMYRA, N.Y.

DEAR DOG TIRED: The problems you described are not your dog's fault. Many rescue animals have "issues" not unlike Sparky's. You need to talk to your vet about this, and also a professional dog trainer. If that doesn't resolve your problem, then contact the rescue group that placed Sparky with you so they can find him another home.

■ ■ ■

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

■ ■ ■

To order "How to Write Letters for All Occasions," send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $6 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Letter Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

HEY, DON'T FIX THAT FOR DINNER! DIDN'T MOM TELL YOU HOBBES AND I ARE ON A STRICT BIG MAC DIET? IT'S DOCTOR'S ORDERS!
OH, I'D BETTER CALL YOUR DOCTOR THEN!
2/29
OH, NO, SHE CALLED MY BLUFF! THE DOCTOR'S GONNA BE FURIOUS! BOY, ARE WE GOING TO GET IT!
"WE"?
I'M DIALING!
©1988 Universal Press Syndicate
HELLO, DOCTOR? I'M CALLING ABOUT CALVIN'S DIETARY NEEDS.
..AT THE TONE, THE TIME WILL BE 6:27 AND 10 SECONDS.
BEEP
BAD NEWS, CALVIN. YOUR DOCTOR SAYS YOU SHOULD HAVE A SPOONFUL OF CASTOR OIL AND LIE DOWN ALL EVENING.
HE DID? REALLY? NO, HE DIDN'T. DID HE? WHAT'S CASTOR OIL?

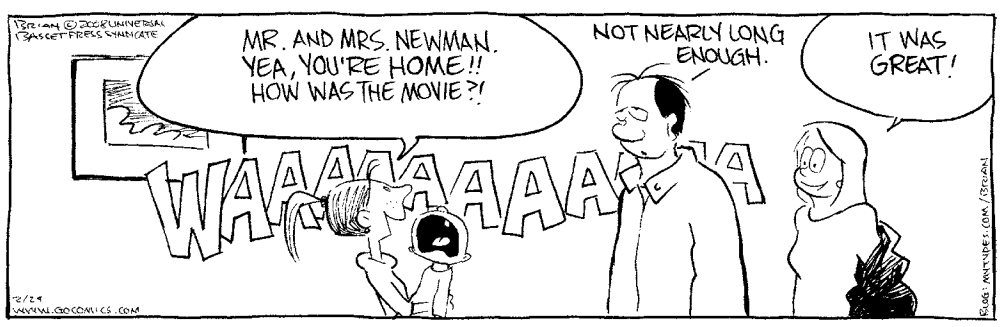
Garfield®

By Jim Davis

JIM DAVIS 2-29
Distributed by Universal Press Syndicate
THERE'S A TRAIN COMING!
© 2008 PAWS, INC. All Rights Reserved.
Text: GARFIELD to 25642 US ONLY

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


MR. AND MRS. NEWMAN. YEA, YOU'RE HOME!! HOW WAS THE MOVIE?!
NOT NEARLY LONG ENOUGH.
IT WAS GREAT!
WAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
WWW.GOCOMICS.COM

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

MR. CAMINO, DID YOU LIE ON YOUR RESUME?
Glenn McCoy by Universal Press Syndicate
BEFORE I ANSWER THAT I'D LIKE TO KNOW IF YOU LIED ABOUT YOUR BENEFITS PACKAGE.
TOUCHE'.
www.gocomics.com

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Data
6 Irving or Grant
9 Choose
12 Wahine's welcome
13 Pigeon's sound
14 Actor McBride
15 Libyan money
16 Hide
18 Pollen-producing organ
20 Kiln
21 Jackie's second mate
23 With it
24 De Mille or Moore-head
25 Unuttered "alas"
27 Wild West transport
29 Overlook
31 It may be lead or grease
35 Anorak
37 Heavy reading?
38 Theme
41 Mine car contents
43 Gripe repeat-edly
44 See 20-Across
45 Odium
47 Set
49 Rendering dumb-founded
52 Smack
53 Dance syllable?
54 Musical link
55 Billboards
56 Switch places?
57 Artist Max

DOWN
1 Craze
2 Hogan's "American Gladiators" co-host
3 Give over (to)
4 Just one of those things?
5 Jessica Parker or Michelle Gellar
6 Take
7 Were-wolf's inspiration
8 Thither
9 Lind-bergh's view
10 Aspect
11 Pinball infractions
17 Appealing to the mind
19 Skinflint
21 "— was saying, ..."
22 Semi, e.g.
24 Time of your life?
26 Optimistic
28 Here and there?
30 U.K. fliers
32 Appropri-ate
33 "— Little Teapot"
34 Journey segment
36 Eucalyp-tus eaters
38 Starbucks flavor
39 Egg-shaped
40 Bivouac array
42 Obliterate
45 Physicist Otto
46 Basin accessory
48 Green (Pref.)
50 Greek conso-nants
51 Obtain

Solution time: 25 mins.

B	A	N	S	■	E	B	B	■	B	E	L	A
L	I	E	U	■	X	I	I	■	A	X	I	L
O	D	O	R	■	E	O	N	■	R	E	T	D
C	A	N	T	O	R	■	G	O	T	C	H	A
■	■	■	A	R	C	■	N	O	R	■	■	■
I	B	E	X	■	I	C	E	S	K	A	T	E
M	A	X	■	■	S	A	X	■	■	T	I	N
P	R	E	M	I	E	R	E	■	S	E	E	D
■	■	■	C	O	O	■	M	U	M	■	■	■
A	L	U	M	N	I	■	P	S	Y	C	H	O
S	I	T	E	■	S	O	L	■	R	O	A	R
A	N	O	N	■	L	E	A	■	N	I	L	E
P	E	R	T	■	E	R	R	■	A	L	T	O

Yesterday's answer 2-29

1	2	3	4	5	■	6	7	8	■	9	10	11
12					■	13			■	14		
15					■	16			17			
■	■	18			19			■	20			
21	22		■	23			■	24				
25			26	■	27		28			■	■	■
29				30		■	31			32	33	34
■	■	■	35			36		■	37			
38	39	40			■	41		42	■	43		
44				■	45				46		■	■
47				48			■	49			50	51
52			■	53			■	54				
55			■	56			■	57				

STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Caitlin E.J. Meyer, 16; Jeff "Ja Rule" Atkins, 32; Antonio Sabato Jr., 36; Joss Ackland, 80

Happy Birthday: Getting all worked up will hold you back. Avoid getting involved in rumors that will waste your time and ruin your reputation. Your progress will come from productivity and solid, steady work. The more industrious you are, the more praise you will receive. Your numbers are 14, 18, 25, 31, 37, 49

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Do something special for someone. Love is in a high cycle so, single or not, an encounter is apparent. The knowledge and contacts you pick up from involvement with groups and organizations will help you out for some time to come. ✪✪✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Put pressure on others in order to get your way. Don't let a partnership that isn't working get to you. Move onward and upward instead of standing still or living in the past. ✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Focus on work, partnerships and accomplishment. An added responsibility may cause some grief but, if you delegate some of the burden to other family members, you can get on with your day. Love is on the rise. ✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Be the one to make the move or the decision. Take a position of leadership. If you are fearful of change, you will probably face an unwelcome direction instead of going down a path you want to travel. ✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): A partnership will develop if you network. Love is in the stars, so be sure to pamper your current partner or, if single, get out and look for someone new. An offer you can't refuse will develop suddenly. ✪✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Look beyond what's dragging you down and you will see an out that will work for you. Emotional matters will lead to anger if you take the bait. Instead, spend your time with people who have similar interests or who work in your field. ✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): You should be involved in activities or events that are entertaining. Make special plans and, most of all, spend quality time with someone who rocks your world. Don't overreact to comments made by someone from your past. ✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Limitations are likely to set in if you are erratic about how you are earning your living. Have a strategy set in place. Do your homework or someone you are close to will complain about your lack of contributing to shared expenses. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Stick close to home and your loved ones and you will get the chance to relax and forget about your troubles. Avoid travel and heated discussions with virtual strangers. Pick your friends carefully. ✪✪✪

CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Alter your routine and you will keep everyone guessing. A deal or financial transaction can be settled if you are practical and lay out your strategy. Look for any change that will make what you do a little different from any competition. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Luck is with you so don't fear making decisions or proceeding with something that you want to pursue. Your insight will provide an opportunity to raise your status. Someone will want to partner with you or help you reach a goal you've set. ✪✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Don't let emotional issues get to you. A strong sense of who you are and what you are capable of will be required if you want to stay on top. Problems at home or with personal paperwork will lead to anxiety and possible arguments. ✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are charming, engaging and very good when it comes to emotional manipulation. You are intelligent and unpredictable.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun,* ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations*

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	4							
9	5	3	4					
	2			1	5			
	3					2		
		7		5		1		
		6					3	
			2	7			6	
					3	5	9	1
							4	

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 2/29

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

5	3	2	6	8	9	7	1	4
8	6	1	7	4	2	5	3	9
7	9	4	1	3	5	8	2	6
9	7	8	5	1	3	4	6	2
6	1	5	4	2	8	9	7	3
4	2	3	9	6	7	1	5	8
3	5	7	2	9	4	6	8	1
1	8	9	3	7	6	2	4	5
2	4	6	8	5	1	3	9	7

Difficulty Level ★★★ 2/28

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

DEBUTANTE PARTIES Solution: 9 letters

E	P	S	N	O	B	L	E	V	E	N	T	T	O	P
L	L	D	S	S	U	O	I	G	I	T	S	E	R	P
E	A	A	R	A	S	O	C	I	A	L	S	E	G	D
M	T	M	B	E	L	H	E	F	D	T	P	R	A	I
O	F	I	R	O	S	C	C	U	A	A	S	G	N	S
C	O	T	L	O	R	S	N	T	R	M	N	V	I	P
L	R	L	B	E	F	A	U	A	H	O	I	C	Z	L
E	M	U	A	C	U	S	T	O	M	T	P	L	E	A
W	B	D	N	O	T	I	C	E	A	O	U	E	Y	Y
M	Y	A	D	T	O	C	E	T	A	D	W	O	S	T
O	O	N	L	N	R	D	I	N	N	E	R	T	Y	I
T	T	I	S	L	C	O	R	L	R	I	R	S	T	R
H	N	T	L	L	N	I	C	I	B	U	I	R	R	A
E	A	A	N	W	O	G	T	S	C	U	O	I	A	H
R	N	S	O	C	I	E	T	Y	E	H	P	F	P	C

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Adult, Ball, Band, Charity, City, Class, Curtsy, Custom, Dance, Date, Dinner, Display, Dress, Elaborate, Elite, Escort, Europe, Event, Family, First, Formal, Gown, Greet, Invitation, Line, Mother, Noble, Notice, Organize, Party, Platform, Preparations, Prestigious, Public, Ready, Rich, Rite, Satin, School, Social, Society, Stage, Star, Status, Welcome, Woman, Youth

Yesterday's Answer: Shangri-La

SALE: The topics of "Wonderword for Kids" appeal to younger fans but the puzzle-difficulty matches what you've come to expect from Wonderword. For a limited time, the book is on sale for just $4 each (U.S. funds only), payable to Universal Press Syndicate. Include $3 postage for the first book order, $1 p&h for each additional book. Send to Wonderword, 4520 Main St., Kansas City, Mo. 64111 or call toll-free, 1-800-255-6734, ext. 6688. **Sorry,** no online orders for this special offer.

CLASSIFIED ADS

CLASSIFIEDS RATES AND POLICIES

Saipan Tribune's Classifieds Section gives you the right exposure without hurting your pockets. Stretch your dollar and get results.

CLASSIFIED ADS

Saipan Tribune also offers a Super Saver Package—a complete 7-day run on both print and online edition, for as low as $25 per 3 liner ad for garage sales, apartment rentals, help wanted, auto and more. You can choose from any of below packages that fits your budget.

ADS (7DAYS)	COMBO (PRINT AND ONLINE)
• 3-Liner	$25
• 5-Liner	$35
• 3-Liner with picture	$45
• 5-Liner with picture	$55

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

All job vacancy announcements will be published for two issues in each of two successive weeks.

1st position	**$13.00**
2nd position	**$5.00**
Succeeding positions	**$2.00**

These rates apply to all job vacancy announcements in Saipan that include corresponding benefits and which positions are all under the same company name and dba.

Newspaper clippings are also available for $.25 per copy.

ADVERTISING DEADLINE

Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

Job Vacancy Announcements

Monday Through Friday Issues: All ads placed before 12 noon will come out the next publication date.

Saturday And Sunday Issues:
- *Saipan Tribune:* All ads placed Friday before 12 noon will come out Saturday issue and anything placed thereafter will be published on either Sunday or Monday issues.

CANCELLATION

Classified Ads

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

Job Vacancy Announcements

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

CHECK YOUR ADS

Saipan Tribune will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

ADVERTISING POLICY

All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

FOR SALE - COMMERCIAL

Bud's Bar For Sell. $20,000 or best offer. You must see to appreciate. #898-4866/233-1113

SMALL ENGINE REPAIR
LAUNDRY REPAIR
Lawn Mower Generator Repair
Boat Engine Bush Cutter Repair
Motor Bike Rewinding
233-5641
Open 7 Day a Week 9:00 AM-9:00 PM

FOR RENT - RESIDENTIAL

Apartment room for rent: Fully furnished 1 brm, T/B, 24-hr water $210/month, near Conwood | Tel. 287-1372, 235-6748

Apartment Room for Rent
2 bed room $230.00, Koblerville.
Contact: 288-0728.

WHATZIT Solution:
West Indies

WANTED: Accountant

Qualifications

- Minimum 2 years manufacturing accounting experience
- Familiarity with Peachtree Premium accounting software and Point of Sale system
- Demonstrated understanding of integrated perpetual inventory accounting, invoicing, accounts receivables, and accounts payable
- Extensive knowledge of accounting principles, practices and the analysis and reporting of financial data
- Must be a team player in a fast-paced work environment

Submit cover letter, resume and any related materials in Adobe Acrobat or MS Word format via email to:
670employment@gmail.com.

PACIFIC ISLANDS CLUB SAIPAN

is actively seeking qualified applicants for the following positions:

Front Office Supervisor

Previous Front Office experience (supervisory or management level) for a minimum 12 month period; must be able to work nights, weekends, and holidays. Korean, Japanese, or Russian language skills desirable.

Housekeeping Supervisor

Previous Experience (supervisory or management level) for a minimum 12 month period; experience in two or more areas within Housekeeping (Rooms / Public Areas / Laundry); must be able to work nights, weekends, and holidays.

Qualified individuals are encouraged to complete an application or send a resume by March 7, 2008 to:

Human Resources Department,
P.O. Box 502370
Saipan, MP 96950
Or E-mail: hr@picsaipan.com

An Equal Opportunity Employer

WHATZIT?™

Find the familiar phrase, saying or name in this arrangement of letters.

D D D
D W D
D D D

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BS Acctg, CPA/foreign equiv pref. Min 2 yrs exp.
MS Excel/Word/Outlook. Great comm skills.
Valid driver's license. Police clearance required.
Email resume to mjg@wdiusa.com. Fax 322-7517
NO PHONE CALLS PLEASE.

USSP Club Needs
(1) Bartender, (2) Waitresses
More Info: Call Rose/233-1984

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

1 PLUMBER (F 13363)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Workers compensation by employer; free transportation to & from the job site; medical insurance 80% by employer and 20% by employee & free housing. Contact: Quad L's Company dba Lifoifoi Building @322-6183.

5 SEWING MACHINE OPERATOR (F 13364)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; self arrange food; medical expenses as required by 3CMC S4437/work compensation. Contact: Shao Hong Xia Jones dba Beauty Boutique & Dress Shop @287-8206.

1 MAINTENANCE (GROUND) (F 13365)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; self provided food; medical & workmen's compensation insurance provided. Contact: Samkor Inc. dba Samkor Congregate @322-0072.

2 WAITER/WAITRESS (F 13366)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self housing; self food; medical provided & workers compensation. Contact: S&D Corporation dba Monte Carlo @235-9147.

1 HOUSEWORKER (F 13367)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Company provided housing at a charge $77.92/monthly; workers compensation & medical. Contact: Mayumi Nakadai @233-7737.

1 HOUSEWORKER (F 13368)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: $100.00/housing; $100.00/food & medical. Contact: Trinidad S. Diaz @236-9805/287-9675.

1 PLUMBER (F 13369)
Salary:$3.55-$4.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food; workmen's compensation & medical. Contact: L&T International Corp. @322-1690.

1 COMPUTER PROGRAMMER (F 13370)
Salary:$3.55-$5.50/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food; workmen's compensation & medical. Contact: L&T International Corp. @322-1690.

3 SECURITY OFFICER (F 13371)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Workers compensation. Contact: Aurelia G. Long dba Paradise Security Services @433-2274.

1 MASON (F 13372)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Housing free & self provided food. Contact: David M./Daria Cing dba Cing's Enterprises.

1 ASSISTANT MANAGER (F 13373)
Salary:$700.00-$3,700.00/monthly. Benefits: Workers compensation & medical expenses company provided. Contact: HIS Saipan, Inc. @234-7053.

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950
Phone: (1-670) 664-3500/1 • Fax: (1-670) 234-5962
E-mail Address: cpa.admin@saipan.com • Website: www.cpa.gov.com

JOB VACANCIES ANNOUNCEMENT

Opening date: Feb. 22, 2008 **Closing date: March 7, 2008**

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) announces the following job vacancies for Saipan Airport, Port of Saipan, and Tinian Airport/Seaport:

1-Executive Director
1-Airport Manager
2-Electricians
1-Vessel Traffic Controller-I (Seaport)
2-General Maintenance-I (Seaport)
3-Ports Police Trainees (Tinian)
1-Tariff Technician-I (Tinian)
2-General Maintenance-I (Tinian)
1-Comptroller
1-Civil Engineer
2-Mechanic-III

Detailed information on minimum qualifications and position description for the above positions may be picked up along with the application form during regular working hours at the CPA's Office (2nd Floor) of the Saipan International Airport, Arrival Wing, or may be downloaded by visiting CPA's website at **www.cpa.gov.mp**. For Tinian's vacancies, application may be picked tip at CPA's Office at the Tinian International Airport.

All applications must be accompanied with a copy of all required diploma/certificates and/or official transcript, original copy of recent police record, original copy of U.S. Department of Defense Form DD214 for retired members or veterans of our Armed Forces, and other documents as required for the position. Public Law 11-70 requires that all male applicants age 18 to 26 years old must submit documentation evidencing his registration with the Federal Selective Service System. Failure to provide any of the required documents may result in automatic disqualification. Pre-qualified applicants for the Ports Police Trainee vacancy must undergo and pass the physical fitness test as prerequisite for interview and selection process. Selected applicants will be subjected to pre-employment drug screening. The deadline for submission of applications is no later than ***4:30 p.m., March 7, 2008.***

CPA is an Equal Opportunity Employer and CPA hires those who are legally entitled to employment in the CNMI.

/s/ REX I. PALACIOS
Chairman
Board of Directors

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

1 ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER (F 13374)
Salary:$700.00-$2,530.00/monthly. Benefits: $10.00-$50.00/gas allowance; $50.00-$350.00/monthly housing; workers compensation & medical expenses company provided. Contact: HIS Saipan, Inc. @234-7053.

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2 WAITRESS/WAITER (F 13375)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Workers compensation & medical expenses company provided. Contact: Jonny's Corporation @233-9019.

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1 (SCUBA DIVING) INSTRUCTOR SPORTS (F 13376)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical expenses & workers compensation employer provided. Contact: Open Knowledge System Inc. @322-6963.

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1 AUTO-MECHANIC (F 13377)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical & workers compensation. Contact: PCC Corporation @235-3048/233-5281.

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1 MATERIAL COORDINATOR (F 13378)
Salary:$3.55-$4.50/hour. Benefits: Medical & workman compensation provided. Contact: Guangdong Dev. Co., Ltd. @288-2288.

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1 COMMERCIAL CLEANER (WF 0001)
Salary:$4:00-4.05/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; medical & workers compensation provided by employer. Contact: Saipan International School dba SIS @ 288-9660.

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2 COUNTER SUPERVISOR (FSUN 0001)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: $100.00/housing deductible; $100.00/food deductible; workmen's compensation & health company provided. Contact: D'Elegance Ent., Inc. dba D'Elegance Rest. @234-9227.

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1 MANAGER, RESERVATIONS (FSUN 0002)
Salary:$1,972.00-$2,200.00/monthly. Benefits: Medical coverage expenses; vacation leave (earned after 1 yr. of service); compassionate leave; employee's discount & workers compensation. Contact: Asia Pacific Hotels, Inc. dba Fiesta Resort & SPA Saipan @234-6412.

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1 SALES MANAGER (FSUN 0003)
Salary:$1,972.00/monthly. Benefits: Medical coverage expenses; vacation leave (earned after 1 yr. of service); sick leave (earned after 90 days of service); compassionate leave; employee's discount & workers compensation. Contact: Asia Pacific Hotels, Inc. @234-7171.

1 GUESTS RELATIONS SUPERVISOR (FSUN 0004)
Salary:$3.55-$5.37/hour. Benefits: Medical coverage expenses; vacation leave (earned after 1 yr. of service); compassionate leave; employee's discount & workers compensation. Contact: Asia Pacific Hotels, Inc. @234-7171.

1 PLUMBER (FSUN 0005)
Salary:$3.55-$5.00/hour. Benefits: Medical coverage expenses; personal leave (earned after 1 yr. of service); compassionate leave; employee's discount & workers compensation. Contact: Asia Pacific Hotels, Inc. @234-7171.

1 FOOD & BEVERAGE MANAGER (FSUN 0006)
Salary:$1,972.00-$2,500.00/monthly. Benefits: Medical coverage expenses; vacation leave (earned after 1 yr. of service); sick leave (earned after 90 days of service); compassionate leave; employee's discount & workers compensation. Contact: Asia Pacific Hotels, Inc. @234-7171.

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1 MANAGER (FSUN 0007)
Salary:$3.75/hour. Benefits: ER provide housing; self provide food; medical & workers compensation. Contact: EEA Corporation @288-6192.

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1 DRESS MAKER (FSUN 0008)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provide food; medical & workers compensation. Contact: BJF Enterprises Inc. @323-8181.

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1 HOUSEWORKER (FSUN 0009)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Free housing; free food; medical & workers compensation. Contact: Norma M. Agana @234-9721.

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1 CARE GIVER (FSUN 0010)
Salary:$400.00/semi-monthly. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; medical & workers compensation. Contact: John & Shirley A. Wilson @288-1816.

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1 HOUSEWORKER (FSUN 0011)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Free housing; free food; medical & workers compensation. Contact: Danilo E. Asiatico @288-4426.

1 COOK (FSUN 0012)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; medical & workers compensation. Contact: Danilo E. Asiatico dba MJ BBQ & Retail @288-1681.

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1 GEN. MANAGER (FSUN 0013)
Salary:$4.05/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; medical & workers compensation. Contact: Global Ocean Divers Inc. @233-8157.

2 DIVING INSTRUCTOR (FSUN 0014)
Salary:$4.05/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; medical & workers compensation. Contact: Global Ocean Divers Inc. @233-8157.

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1 MANAGER (FSUN 0015)
Salary:$5.00/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; medical & workers compensation. Contact: Thai Massage Inc. dba Massage Service @233-2441.

4 MASSEUSE/MASSEUR (FSUN 0016)
Salary:$5.00/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; medical & workers compensation. Contact: Thai Massage Incorporated dba Thai Massage @233-2441.

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1 WEDDING CONSULTANT, SUPERVISOR (FSUN 0017)
Salary:$3.55-$10.90/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food; $200.00/monthly allowance & $30.00/monthly allowance transportation; medical & workers compensation insurance provided by employer. Contact: Watabe Saipan, Inc. dba Watabe Wedding @235-9332.

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1 ELECTRICIAN (FSUN 0018)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food; medical & workers compensation provided by employer. Contact: KP Company Ltd. @322-0007.

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1 COOK (FSUN 0019)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Workmans compensation & medical insurance. Contact: Auntie Mag's Food & Catering dba Auntie Mag's Food & Catering @288-4799.

2 FOOD SERVER (FSUN 0020)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Workmans compensation & medical insurance. Contact: Auntie Mag's Food & Catering dba Auntie Mag's Food & Catering @288-4799.

1 WAREHOUSE WORKER (FSUN 0021)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Workmans compensation & medical insurance. Contact: Auntie Mag's Food & Catering dba Auntie Mag's Food & Catering @288-4799.

2 FOOD ATTENDANT (FSUN 0022)
Salary:$3.55/houir. Benefits: Workmans compensation & medical insurance. Contact: Auntie Mag's Food & Catering dba Auntie Mag's Food & Catering @288-4799.

2 KITCHEN HELPER (FSUN 0023)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Workmans compensation & medical insurance. Contact: Auntie Mag's Food & Catering dba Auntie Mag's Food & Catering @288-4799.

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1 ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT (FSUN 0024)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self provided housing; provided own food; workers compensation; medical covered & free transportation. Contact: Advance Group, LLC dba Advance X-Terminators & Pest Control @233-4747.

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1 MANAGER (FSUN 0025)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; free food on duty; workers compensation & medical provided by employer. Contact: Saigon Enterprises, Inc. dba Saigon Vietnam Restaurant @233-6868.

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2 COOK (FSUN 0026)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical & workers compensation provided by employer. Contact: Ming Dynasty Investment Corp. dba Ming Palace Chinese Restaurant @234-1005.

1 WAITRESS/WAITER (FSUN 0027)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; medical & workers compensation provided by employer. Contact: Ming Dynasty Investment Corp. dba Ming Palace Chinese Restaurant @234-1005.

1 BARTENDER (FSUN 0028)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; medical & workers compensation provided by employer. Contact: Ming Dynasty Investment Corp. dba Ming Palace Chinese Restaurant @234-1005.

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1 CARPENTER (FSUN 0029)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; medical expenses & workers compensation. Contact: EAP Corporation dba Filtrade Gen. Construction @234-6241.

2 MASON (FSUN 0030)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; medical expenses & workers compensation. Contact: EAP Corporation dba Filtrade Gen. Construction @234-6241.

1 CARPET LAYER (FSUN 0031)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; medical expenses & workers compensation. Contact: EAP Corporation dba Filtrade Gen. Construction @234-6241.

1 BLDG. MAINTENANCE REPAIRER (FSUN 0032)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; medical expenses & workers compensation. Contact: EAP Corporation dba Filtrade Gen. Construction @234-6241.

1 ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT (FSUN 0033)
Salary:$3.75/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; medical expenses & workers compensation. Contact: EAP Corporation dba Filtrade Gen. Construction @234-6241.

1 BDLG. MAINTENANCE (CLEANER) REPAIRER (FSUN 0034)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; medical expenses & workers compensation. Contact: EAP Corporation dba Filtrade Gen. Construction @234-6241.

1 COMMERCIAL CLEANER (FSUN 0035)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; medical expenses & workers compensation. Contact: EAP Corporation dba Filtrade Gen. Construction @234-6241.

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1 GRAPHICS DESIGNER (FSUN 0036)
Salary:$1,670.00/monthly. Benefits: Workers compensation & medical expenses company provided. Contact: Hi-Five Co., Ltd. @233-4616.

1 INTERPRETER (ASSISTANT ADVISOR) (FSUN 0037)
Salary:$1,000.00-$1,500.00/monthly. Benefits: Workers compensation & medical expenses company provided. Contact: Hi-Five Co., Ltd. @233-4616.

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1 ACCOUNTING MANAGER (FSUN 0038)
Salary:$1,211.54-$1,332.70/monthly. Benefits: Free housing if no A/C; medical insurance; vacation leave & workers compensation. Contact: Triple J Saipan, Inc. @234-1795.

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3 CAR RENTAL CLERK (FSUN 0039)
Salary:$3.55-$4.15/hour. Benefits: Free housing if no A/C; medical insurance; vacation leave & workers compensation. Contact: Triple J Rentals (Micronesia), Inc. dba Hertz Rent A Car @234-1795.

1 LOT ATTENDANT (SUPERVISOR) (FSUN 0040)
Salary:$4.33-$4.50/hour. Benefits: Free housing if no A/C; medical insurance; vacation leave & workers compensation. Contact: Triple J Rentals (Micronesia), Inc. dba Hertz Rent A Car @234-1795.

1 AUTOMOTIVE MECHANIC (FSUN 0041)
Salary:$3.90-$4.15/hour. Benefits: Free housing if no A/C; medical insurance; vacation leave & workers compensation. Contact: Triple J Rentals (Micronesia), Inc. dba Hertz Rent A Car @234-1795.

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1 ETHYLENE COMPRESSOR OPERATOR (FSUN 0042)
Salary:$4.40-$4.65/hour. Benefits: Free housing if no A/C; medical insurance; vacation leave & workers compensation. Contact: Triple J Five Star Wholesale Foods, Inc. @322-6502.

1 ACCOUNTANT (FSUN 0043)
Salary:$6.06-$6.31/hour. Benefits: Free housing if no A/C; medical insurance; vacation leave & workers compensation. Contact: Triple J Five Star Wholesale Foods, Inc. @322-6502.

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1 BUILDING MAINTENANCE REPAIRER (FSUN 0044)
Salary:$3.55-$6.25/hour. Benefits: Self arranged food; medical coverage expenses & workers compensation. Contact: Joseph C. Ada dba Ada's Apartment @234-6854.

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1 GEN. MAINTENANCE & REPAIR (FSUN 0045)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self provided housing; self provided food; medical & workman's compensation provided. Contact: Dr. Vicente S. Aldan @235-8864.

Northern Marianas College
Procurement & Property Management Office

INVITATION FOR BID
*****AMENDED*****

IFB 08-001 - Paupau Beach Marine-Environmental and Marine-Culture Center Demonstration Center Construction Project

Northern Marianas College is soliciting competitive sealed bids for construction of the Paupau Beach Environmental Marine and Mari-Culture Demonstration Center, in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands.

Specifications and Scope of Work packages may now be picked up at the NMC Procurement Office, Bldg. L, 2nd Floor, Monday to Friday between the hours of 8: 30-11:30 a.m. and 1:00-4:30 p.m. There may be a fee when picking up a package. Please call 234-5498 ext. 2300/01/02 for information regarding fees. Construction drawings and diagrams have to be purchased.

There will be a Project Briefing Conference, March 4th, 2008, 9:00 a.m. at the NMC As Terlaje Campus, CREES conference room (Bldg. F). Please contact Mr. Glenn Keaton (ext. 1200) or Mr. Lee Bowen (ext. 1728) at 234-5498 for more information.

Bid Packages are due March 21st, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. Saipan time at the Northern Marianas College, As Terlaje Campus, Procurement Office, Bldg. L, 2nd Floor, Saipan, MP 96950. All bidders must pay a Bid Security Deposit of 15% of their total bid when submitting bid packages.

Bidding procedures shall be in compliance with NMC and CNMI Procurement Regulations, however, Article 7, "Local Business Preference", as amended by Public Laws 15-95 and as further amended by Public Law 15-118, is not available to local bidders in this procurement because; it is prohibited by the federal law granting the funding for this project. For bidders located outside of the CNMI: You may request a copy of the Invitation for Bid via fax (670) 235-7601 or e-mail to Duane R.T. Sablan (duanes@nmcnet.edu). There may be a processing fee.

Bidders are advised that this project is subject to compliance with the Davis-Bacon Act and the labor standard provisions for wage rate determination of the Commonwealth. All labor on the project shall be paid no less than the minimum wage rate of $3.55 per hour which took effect on July 25, 2007 as established by Federal law including subsequent increases of $.50 per hour every six (6) months (or next effective dates) until the hourly rate equals that of the Federal Minimum Wage of $7.50 per hour.

This project is funded by a grant from the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), under its Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) provided to the Commonwealth. This project is also subject to Section 3 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1968 that requires recipients of HUD funds and the contractors to help insure that the economic opportunities generated by these HUD funds are provided to local low-income residents and the businesses that serve them "to the maximum extent feasible."

All bidders are hereby notified that the Northern Marianas College and CNMI Government will affirmatively insure that in any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement, women and small business enterprises will be afforded full opportunity to submit proposals and will not be discriminated against on grounds of race, color, national origin, political affiliation, creed, sex, religion, age, familial status, and disability status.

This solicitation does not constitute an offer and does not obligate the College in any way. The NMC reserves the right to reject any and/or all proposals for any reason and waive any defect in said proposals, or cancel in part or its entirety this RFP, if it deems, in its sole discretion, it is in the best interest of the College. All costs incurred by the bidder to prepare a response this solicitation and subsequent inquiries shall be borne by the bidder. All submittals shall become the property of NMC and will not be returned.

Approved by the following:

/s/ Duane R.T. Sablan	Manuel A. Sablan	Glenn Keaton
NMC Procurement & Property Property Management Office	Chairman & Contracting Officer Northern Marianas Housing Corporation	Chair, NMC Sciences, Maths Health & Athletics Department

VEHICLE FOR SALE
1997 NISSAN PATHFINDER

For more information, please contact the Bank of Guam credit Department at telephone number (670) 233-5000 extension 205, 206, 207 and 208.
Bids will be closed on
Friday, February 29, 2008
at **6:00 p.m.**

The Bank reserves the right to reject any or all offers.

BANK OF GUAM
THE PEOPLE'S BANK
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P.O. Box 500678, Saipan MP 96950

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Commonwealth I Sankattan Siha Na Islas Mariana
Ofisinan I Gubietno
Dipåttamenton I Tano' Pupbliku

NOTISIAN PRINIPONEN ATKILON TÅNO' PUBLIKU

Segun i Lai Publiku 15-2, I Dipåttamenton Tano' Publiku man-nånå'i' notisia pot i intension para ma'atkilan tano' publiku giya Saipan, Commonwealth Sankatan siha na Islas Marianas. Maseha håye na petsona interesao, siña muna halom opinion, infotmasion, yan kinentra pot i mapropone na atkilon tano publiku. I mapropopone i sigiente siha.

i. Para uma`atkila tano' publiku madeskribe kumo i numiron propiadåt 003 A 11, konsisiste kuårentai-nuebe mit kuåttro sientos sinkuentai-nuebe metro (49,459) square meters, 003 A 20, ha konsisiste kuårentai-nuebe mit, kinientos tres (49,503) square meters, 003 A 19, ha konsisiste dies mit(10,000) square meters, mas o` menos ni gaige giya Marpi, Saipan. Kopian i lugåt i sitiu gaige gi Depåttamenton Tano' Publiku ni libre hao umina.

ii. I para u inatkila este na tano i Win DnC. Co., LTD, un koporasion gi CNMI. I kuetpon direktot siha i sigente: Youngjai Kim, Kwon Hee Lee, yan si Kwi Dong Woo.

I presidente yan treserun i koporasion si Youngjai Kim. I segundo presidente si Kwon Hee Lee; sekritåria si Kwi Dong Woo.

iii. Si Señor Youngjai Kim (Presidente yan Treseru), Kwon Hee Lee (segundon i Presidente) yan si Kwi Dong Woo (Sekritårio), munigosiu i kontratan atkilon.

iv. I para u inatkila i lugåt debi de u usa solamente para u håtsa ya u establesi un hotel yan ottro siha fasilidåt.

I mapropone na tiempon kontråtan atkilon para bente-siñko åños (25 yrs.), yan appottunidat ma-ekstiende para talo kinse åños (15 yrs.).

I mapropone na åpas atkilon gi sakkan durånten i tiempo sigun i mapega na presiu segun i balin i lugåt.

v. I kabåles na kopian i mapropone na kontråtan atkilon siña un chule gi ofisinan I Dipåttamenton Tano' Publiku, ni gaige gi mina dos na bibienda gi Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, giya Saipan, mina dos bibienda gi Bank of Saipan Commercial Building giya Luta, fine'nina na bibienda gi Kings Commercial Building giya Tinian.

vi. Taya otro propositu guaha pot kontråtan atkilon tano publiko ni tineteka iya Marpi, Saipan.

vii. I Sekretarion Dipåttamenton Tano' Publiku siempre hu aksepta tinige' opinion, mensåhen kinentra yan testimonio osino otro siha na propositu ginen i man-interesao na petsona åntes de Matsu 6, 2008 gi Ofisinan Dipåttamenton Tano' Publiku siha ni gaige giya Saipan, Tinian yan Luta.

ARONGORONG REEL POMWOL AKKILONUL FALÚWEER TOULAP

Sángi Tálil 106 (b) mellól Alléghúl Toulap ye 15-2, Bwulasiyool Ammwelil Falúweer Toulap ekke atotoowow ammataf igha ebwe akkilaaló eghús falúw mellól Seipél, Commonwealth Téél Falúwasch Marianas. Schóókka eyoor máfiyeer rebwe isisilong ischil mángámangiir, aweewe, aingiingil reel pomwol akkilonul ammwelil falúweer toulap. Me bwal Alléghúl Toulap ye 15-2, e ayoora, lamal aweewe kka rebwe mweiti ngali milikka ebwe akkatééló.

i. Pomwol akkilonul falúweer toulap ekke bwáári Lot No. 003 A 11, eyoor faigh me tiwow sangaras fabwughuw limeigh me tiwow llapal (49,459 square meters), elap me ngáre eghús, Lot No. 003 A 20, faigh me tiwoow sangaras, lima bwughuw elluw (49,503) sq. meters llapal, elap me ngare eghuus, me Lot No. 003 A 19,, seigh sangaras (10,000) sq. meters, llapal, elap me eghus, elo Máschepi, Seipél. Tilighial bwuley yeel nge eyoor llól Bwulasiyool Ammwelil Falúweer Toulap (Public Lands) ngare óubwe ghuley fischiy.

ii. Schéschéél schóól akkilon nge Win DnC Co., LTD., corporation. Schóól Assamwoolul mwiisch (board of directors) mellol corporation nge Youngjai Kim, Kwon Hee Lee me Kwidong Woo.

Samwoolul (President me Treasurer) corporation nge Youngjai Kim. Vice President nge Kwon Hee Lee. Sekkretório nge Kwidong Woo.

iii. Schóól aweweel akkilon nge Youngjai Kim (Samwoolul me Treasurer), Kwon Hee Lee (Vice President) me Kwidong Woo (Sekkretório) corporation yeel.

iv. Schóól akkilon ebwe yááyá bwuley ngali schagh akkayul hotel me akkaw iimw kka a fillong.

Tool aighúghúl pomwol akkilon ebwe ruweigh me limwoow ráágh (25 years), emmwel rebwe sóbweey ngáli bwal seigh me limwoow ráágh (15 years).

Pomwol akkilon ebwe mwir sángi llapal méél falúw (value of the property).

v. Emmwel óubwe bwughil tilighial akkilon mellól bwulasiyool ammwelil falúweer toulap, elo aruwowal pwó(2nd floor) me Joeten Dandan Commercial Building llól Dandan, Seipél; aruwowal pwó (2nd floor) mellól Bank of Saipan Commercial Buiding, Luuta; me ngáre mmwal pwó (1st floor) mellól Kings Commercial Building, Tchúlúyól.

vi. Bwulasiyool Ammwelil Falúweer Toulap nge esáál bweibwogh mwo akkááw pomwol akkilon yeel me Máschepi, Seipél.

vii. Samwoolul Bwulasiyool Ammwelil Falúweer Toulap ebwe bwughil aweewe kkaal, aingiingil, mereer ameyút aramas mmwal schagh Ghúúw(Móózo) 6, 2007 mellól Depattamentool Bwulasiyool Ammwelil Falúweer Toulap iye elo Seipél, Luuta me Tchúlúyól..

NOTICE OF PROPOSED LEASE OF PUBLIC LAND

In accordance with Section 106 (b) of Public Law 15-2, the Department of Public Lands hereby gives notice of its intent to lease certain public lands in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Any interested parties of the general public may submit comments, data, views, or arguments of alternative proposals for the lease of the public land. As further provided by Public Law 15-2, the following pertinent information is required to be published.

i. The proposed lease of public land is described as Lot No. 003 A 11, containing an area of approximately 49,459 square meters, more or less, Lot No. 003 A 20, containing an area of approximately 49,503 square meters, more or less, and Lot No. 003 A 19, containing an area of approximately 10,000 square meters, situated in Marpi, Saipan. A copy of the location of the parcel is available at the Department of Public Lands for inspection.

ii. The prospective lessee is Win DnC Co., LTD., a CNMI corporation. The board of directors of the corporation are Youngjai Kim, Kwon Hee Lee, and Kwidong Woo.

The president and treasurer of the corporation is Youngjai Kim. The vice president is Kwon Hee Lee. The secretary is Kwidong Woo.

iii. The proposed lease was negotiated by Mr. Youngjai Kim, Mr. Kwon Hee Lee, and Mr. Kwidong Woo, president/treasurer, vice president, and secretary, respectively, of the corporation.

iv. The lessee shall use the premises solely for the purpose of constructing and developing a hotel and related facilities.

The term of the proposed lease agreement is 25 years, with an option to extend the lease for an additional 15 years.

The proposed annual rental during the term is based on a percentage of the appraised fair market value of the property.

v. A copy of the proposed lease agreement may be obtained at the office of the Department of Public Lands, located on the 2nd floor of the Joeten Dandan Commercial Building in Dandan, Saipan; the 2nd floor of the Bank of Saipan Commercial Building, Rota; or the 1st floor of the Kings Commercial Building, Tinian.

vi. The Department of Public Lands has received no alternative proposals to lease the subject public land in Marpi, Saipan.

vii. The Secretary of the Department of Public Lands shall accept written comments, views, arguments or alternative proposals from interested parties on or before March 6, 2008 at the Department of Public Lands offices located in Saipan, Rota or Tinian.

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
State Board of Education
Public School System
P. O. Box 501370, Saipan, MP 96950

Invitation For Bid
IFB 08-024

The Public School System and the CNMI State Board of Education are soliciting competitive sealed bids for the renovation of the following PSS Head Start Centers:

1. **Tanapag Head Start**
2. **W.S. Reyes Head Start (BLDG. B)**

Detailed information on the scope of work and specifications are available, for a fee, at Pacific Quick Print & Post located in Middle Road, Garapan, Saipan. **All interested bidders, prior to obtaining copies of the detailed information, shall register with the PSS Office of Procurement & Supply.**

The PSS Office of Procurement & Supply is located on the 3rd Floor of the NMI Retirement Fund Building, Capital Hill Area, Saipan, MP 96950.

All bids shall be in a sealed envelope face marked "IFB 08-024" containing (1) original and five (5) copies and submitted to the PSS Procurement and Supply Office no later than March 18, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. Responsibility Determination documents shall be placed in a separate envelope mark-ed "IFB 08-024, CONFIDENTIAL - Responsibility Determination" (1-original and one copy). Any bid after the aforementioned date and time will not be accepted under any circumstance.

A mandatory pre-bid conference will be held at the PSS Conference Room, 3rd Floor NMI Retirement Fund Building, on February 28, 2008 at 9:00 a.m. Site visits, to be scheduled, are mandatory. Scheduled dates and times are subject to change.

General inquiries shall be directed to Mr. Juan Babauta at telephone number 237-3062. Technical questions shall be in writing and addressed to Mr. Carl Dela Cruz, Acting Procurement & Supply Officer, via fax # (670) 664-3791. Alternatively, questions may be e-mailed to the following address: **delacruzc@pss.cnmi.mp**.

Contractors are required to submit with their bid, a copy of their valid CNMI Business License.

All bids shall become the property of the Public School System.

/S/ Dr. David M. Borja, D.B.A.
Commissioner of Education

/S/ Carl Dela Cruz, M.B.A.
Acting P & S Officer

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
State Board of Education
Public School System
P. O. Box 501370, Saipan, MP 96950

Invitation For Bid
IFB 08-025

The Public School System is soliciting competitive sealed bids for the purchase, delivery, installation, and assembly of **Classroom Furniture and Audio Equipment for Saipan Southern High School, Saipan**. Detailed information on the Scope of Work is available at the PSS Procurement & Supply Office located on the 3rd floor of the NMI Retirement Fund Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950.

All bids shall be in a sealed envelope face marked "IFB 08-025" containing one (1) original and three (3) copies and submitted to the PSS Procurement and Supply Office no later than **March 11, 2008 at 10:00 a.m.** Responsibility Determination documents shall be placed in a separate envelope marked "IFB 08-025, CONFIDENTIAL - Responsibility Determination" (one (1)-original and one (1)-copy). Any bid after the aforementioned date and time will not be accepted under any circumstance.

Technical questions shall be in writing and addressed to Mr. Carl de la Cruz, Acting Procurement & Supply Officer, via the following fax number: (670) 664-3791. Alternatively, technical questions may be e-mailed to the following address: **delacruzc@pss.cnmi.mp**. Questions shall be submitted at least three (3) business days prior to the deadline to submit bids.

General inquiries may be directed to the PSS Procurement and Supply Office at telephone numbers 237-3062 or 3035.

Bidders are required to submit with their bid, a copy of their valid CNMI Business License.

The Public School System reserves the right to award single or multiple awards or to reject any or all bids, in whole or in part, if to do so is in the best interest of the Public School System.

All bids shall become the property of the Public School System.

/S/ Dr. David M. Borja, D.B.A.
Commissioner of Education

/S/ Carl F. de la Cruz, M.B.A.
Acting P&S Officer

Clemens declines to comment on DOJ probe

KISSIMMEE, Fla. (AP)—Roger Clemens declined to say whether he was aware Congress had asked the Justice Department to investigate whether he lied in sworn testimony about steroid use. A letter drafted by House Oversight and Government Reform Committee chairman Henry Waxman and ranking Republican Tom Davis was sent to Attorney General Michael Mukasey on Wednesday.

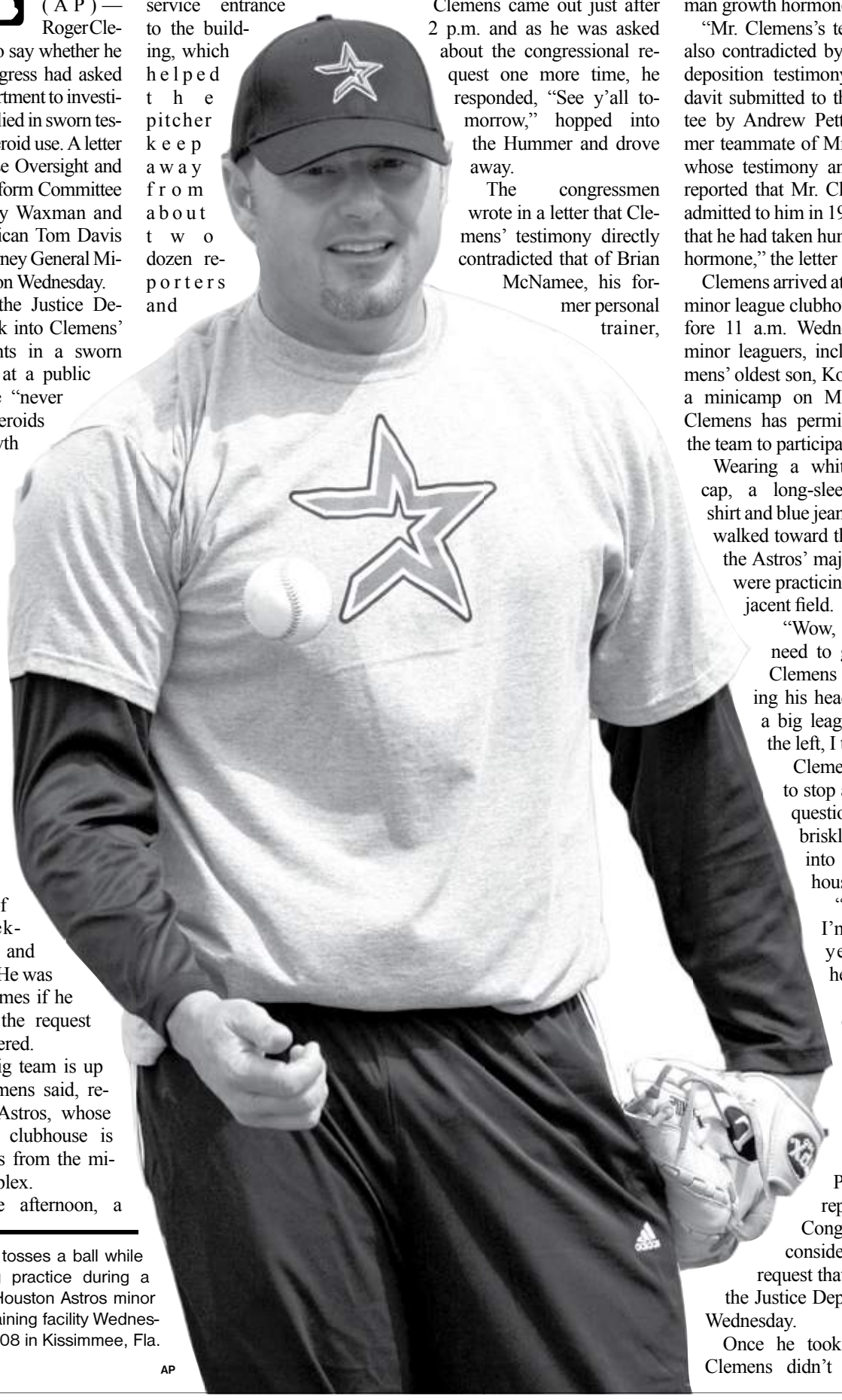
They asked the Justice Department to look into Clemens' recent statements in a sworn deposition and at a public hearing that he "never used anabolic steroids or human growth hormone."

Clemens was working with minor leaguers at the Houston Astros' spring training camp when the congressional request became official.

When he was finished, the seven-time Cy Young Award winner emerged from an indoor batting cage to a large group of autograph-seekers, reporters and photographers. He was asked several times if he was aware of the request and never answered.

"Guys, the big team is up that way," Clemens said, referring to the Astros, whose spring training clubhouse is about 200 yards from the minor league complex.

Later in the afternoon, a clubhouse assistant backed Clemens' black Hummer up to a service entrance to the building, which helped the pitcher keep away from about two dozen reporters and photographers who tracked him all day.



Roger Clemens tosses a ball while throwing batting practice during a workout at the Houston Astros minor league spring training facility Wednesday, Feb. 27, 2008 in Kissimmee, Fla.

AP

Clemens came out just after 2 p.m. and as he was asked about the congressional request one more time, he responded, "See y'all tomorrow," hopped into the Hummer and drove away.

The congressmen wrote in a letter that Clemens' testimony directly contradicted that of Brian McNamee, his former personal trainer, who said he injected Clemens with anabolic steroids and human growth hormone.

"Mr. Clemens's testimony is also contradicted by the sworn deposition testimony and affidavit submitted to the committee by Andrew Pettitte, a former teammate of Mr. Clemens, whose testimony and affidavit reported that Mr. Clemens had admitted to him in 1999 or 2000 that he had taken human growth hormone," the letter said.

Clemens arrived at the Astros' minor league clubhouse just before 11 a.m. Wednesday. The minor leaguers, including Clemens' oldest son, Koby, opened a minicamp on Monday and Clemens has permission from the team to participate.

Wearing a white baseball cap, a long-sleeved black shirt and blue jeans, Clemens walked toward the horde as the Astros' major leaguers were practicing on an adjacent field.

"Wow, you guys need to get a life," Clemens said, shaking his head. "There's a big league team to the left, I think."

Clemens refused to stop and answer questions before briskly walked into the clubhouse.

"I did all I'm gonna do yesterday," he said.

On Tuesday, Clemens would not answer direct questionsabout Andy Pettitte or reports that Congress was considering the request that it made to the Justice Department on Wednesday.

Once he took the field, Clemens didn't seem distracted by the news from Washington. He came out of the clubhouse just before noon, dressed in gym shoes, black warm-up pants, a red Astros jacket and a black Astros cap.

He tutored Astros prospect Brian Bogusevic on his pitching form, then shed his jacket and took the mound on one of the team's practice fields.

Underneath the jacket, Clemens was wearing a gray T-shirt that had an Astros' star logo on the front and read "There is Only One Star" on the back.

Koby Clemens, a catcher in the Astros' farm system, was the first batter, hitting several deep fly balls off his father as about 100 fans watched from behind a steel gate and yelled encouragement.

"The fans are behind you!" said one. "We love you, Roger!" said another.

Two Clemens supporters wore T-shirts that read "Rocket Fuel Has No HGH."

"I believe him," said Guy Rabich, who made the shirts at his home in nearby St. Petersburg. "He is the greatest of all time. I do feel bad for him. He's really a nice guy, nice to fans, nice to everybody."

Clemens threw on the outdoor field for about 45 minutes, giving advice to batters between pitches.

"Get your eyes working, come on," he said after infielder Danny Klassen swung and missed.

A few pitches later, Klassen smacked a line drive to left-center.

"There you go!" Clemens said.

He cracked a smile when infielder Chris Johnson swung and missed at a a breaking ball.

"Threw you a dead fish," Clemens said. "That came out of my hand funny."

Clemens threw in the indoor cage for about 30 minutes. He planned to pitch to the minor leaguers again on Thursday and Friday.

MLB BRIEFS

DeRosa to have heart procedure

MESA, Ariz. (AP)—Cubs second baseman Mark DeRosa will undergo a heart procedure in Chicago on Thursday to correct an irregular heartbeat. Team doctor Stephen Adams said DeRosa is expected to return to Arizona on Sunday, be back on the field as early as Monday and ready to play in spring training games by March 8. "Theoretically, this should take care of the problem," Adams said Wednesday. Alan Kadish, a cardiovascular electro physiologist at Northwestern Hospital, will perform the hour-long procedure that Adams described as "simple but very high tech." DeRosa should return to his Chicago home Thursday night, Adams said. The infielder experienced an irregular heartbeat Saturday during a workout and spent the night in a Mesa hospital. He returned to Chicago on Monday and underwent a medical evaluation Tuesday. "We're thinking about Mark," said Cubs manager Lou Piniella, whose team went through a morning workout Wednesday before its spring training opener Thursday against the San Francisco Giants in Scottsdale. "Everything will go fine and he'll be back this weekend." DeRosa, who turned 33 on Tuesday, said earlier this week he'd had the condition since he was a teenager. "He's in an excellent mood. Ready to go, very open," Adams said.

Rays' Kazmir out 2 weeks

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP)—Tampa Bay left-hander Scott Kazmir will miss at least two weeks of spring training because of an elbow strain. The Rays say a MRI examination did not reveal a serious injury. The 24-year-old American League strikeout champion was injured Tuesday on his final warmup pitch for an appearance in an intrasquad game. Kazmir remains confident he'll be ready for Opening Day.

Giants SS Vizquel to have knee surgery

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. (AP)—San Francisco probably will be without Omar Vizquel's sparkling defense at shortstop on opening day.

Vizquel will have arthroscopic surgery on his left knee Wednesday and is expected to miss four to six weeks. The 11-time Gold Glove shortstop, who turns 41 in April, tested his knee Tuesday but said the pain was too much to handle.

"My knee was feeling good," Vizquel said. "I wanted to give it a hard shot in order to make a decision. It didn't work. I felt a little pop when I was running. That's what I wanted to see—to see if I could sustain the pain, and I couldn't."

As for Vizquel's return, athletic trainer Dave Groeschner said: "The goal is the first week of the season but the knee will tell us."

Team orthopedist Ken Akizuki is scheduled to perform the operation back in the Bay Area to remove a torn medial meniscus. Vizquel was expected back in camp Thursday.\

Minus Vizquel, manager Bruce Bochy plans to use Kevin Frandsen at shortstop. Once Vizquel is back, Frandsen still could compete for the starting job at second base with Ray Durham.

Vizquel had been nursing what was described as an inflamed knee since late last week and was held out of conditioning drills. He underwent an MRI exam that revealed the tear.

The Giants didn't want Vizquel to be hampered by the problem all season and believe his rehabilitation will be speedy considering he is in such good shape.

"It's like a thorn in your knee," Bochy said. "Omar agrees that the best thing to do is get this thing cleared out. We think at most he'll miss maybe a week (of the regular season)."

In November, Vizquel agreed to a $5.3 million, one-year contract to stay with San Francisco for a fourth season. The deal includes a club option that could make it worth $10.2 million over two seasons.

Vizquel said upon arriving at spring training he would evaluate his baseball future after the 2008 season. He has aspirations to be a manager.

"I love playing in San Francisco," Vizquel said. "I like to be comfortable in a place. I'd like to retire with a team I feel comfortable with and where I have a lot of friends."

Yet Vizquel, who constantly compares himself to a 20-something considering his good health and fitness, has said he still has plenty in him as a player. He would like to play for Venezuela in the second World Baseball Classic next year, too.

Take this statement when he arrived at Scottsdale Stadium for the first time this spring:

"I feel great, man. I feel like a GT 500 with a 429 engine. That car was made the same year I was born. I feel just like it, an old classic car hopefully still with some value."

He batted just .246 with four home runs and 51 RBIs last season. He continued to play the dazzling defense that has defined his 19-year major league career.

Vizquel then opted to play several weeks of winter ball in Venezuela as sort of a farewell tour in his homeland.

"The fans are going to see it as a bad thing with Omar going down, but it's not a year thing," Frandsen said. "I'm open arms to this whole situation. Maybe it's that opportunity I've been looking for to get everyday at-bats. We hope Omar gets back as soon as possible. We all know what he means to this team and this organization."

The 25-year-old Frandsen has played 25 games at shortstop in parts of two big league seasons. He expects to receive plenty of help along the way with making any necessary adjustments.

"His situation will change a little bit and he will get more regular action at shortstop," Bochy said. "He's going to get consistent playing time and this helps out the evaluation more. We know he can play second base."

Celtics top Cavs as James hits milestone

BOSTON (AP)—LeBron James returned from a first-half ankle injury to score 26 and become the youngest player in NBA history to reach the 10,000-point milestone, but the Boston Celtics got 22 points from Ray Allen to beat the Cleveland Cavaliers 92-87 on Wednesday night.

Kevin Garnett scored 18 with 11 rebounds for Boston to help the NBA's top team win its third straight and improve to 2-2 for the season against the defending Eastern Conference champions.

James sprained his ankle and missed the last 4:24 of the first half, but X-rays were negative and he was back for the start of the second. Cavs coach Mike Brown took a longer break: He was ejected with 42 seconds left in the third quarter after he had to be restrained by his assistants while arguing a foul call against James.

But neither James' performance on the court or Brown's outburst could help Cleveland close what was a double-digit deficit most of the game. After hitting the first two baskets of the fourth quarter to make it 75-66, the Cavs never got closer than 10 points until the final minute.

Delonte West's meaningless 3-pointer at the buzzer counted because of goaltending, making it appear closer than it was.

James was hurt after driving for a layup, either twisting something on his way to the basket or when he landed. He hobbled off toward the Cavaliers bench and then dropped onto the court in front of the scorer's table with 4:24 left in the first half.

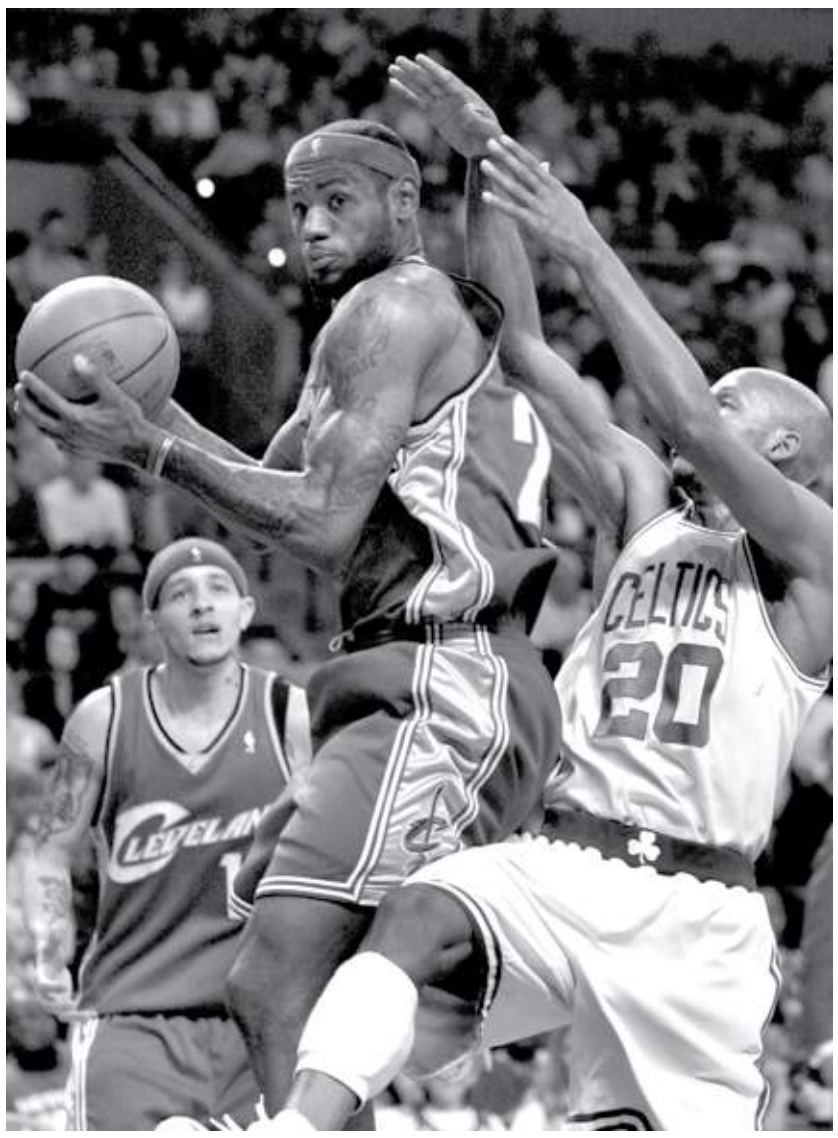
Brown and the training staff rushed over to attend to James, while the crowd hushed and the players on both benches looked over to see what was happening. After being looked at on the floor for a few minutes, he limped off to the locker room, favoring his right leg, getting a cheer from the Boston fans.

James reached the 10,000-point milestone at 23 years and 59 days. It took him 368 games to do it—the ninth-fastest in league history.

James reached the 10,000-point milestone at 23 years and 59 days, more than a year younger than Kobe Bryant was when he hit the milestone in 2003 (24 years, 193 days). It took James 368 games to do it—the ninth-fastest in league history.

But he missed another mark: He had scored at least 30 points in nine consecutive games against the Celtics.

Boston led 25-16 after one quarter, with 12-5 rebounding edge, then took a 33-18 lead early in the second.



AP

Cleveland Cavaliers' LeBron James drives to the hoop against Boston Celtics' Ray Allen (20) as teammate Delonte West, left, watches in the second half of their NBA basketball game in Boston, Wednesday, Feb. 27, 2008.

Bulls 113, Pacers 107

At Indianapolis, Larry Hughes had 29 points and Drew Gooden added 10 points and 15 rebounds, helping Chicago to a victory.

Mike Dunleavy had 25 points, Travis Diener scored 22 and Troy Murphy chipped in 19 for slumping Indiana.

Knicks 113, Bobcats 89

At New York, Nate Robinson scored 22 points, Jamal Crawford added 20, and New York matched its most lopsided victory of the season.

The Knicks, usually suffering the hidings, blew by banged-up Charlotte after a slow start, getting 25 fastbreak points and shooting 51 percent from the floor.

Matt Carroll scored 19 points for the Bobcats, who lost their third straight.

76ers 101, Magic 89

At Philadelphia, Andre Miller scored 22 of his 26 points in the first half and Willie Green had a season-high 26 to lead Phildadelphia.

The Sixers had lost their first two meetings to Orlando this month, four straight overall and six of the last seven.

Andre Iguodala added 24 points, and the Sixers constantly harassed Orlando center Dwight Howard, who managed 14 points and 16 rebounds.

Raptors 107, Timberwolves 85

At Toronto, Chris Bosh scored 28 points, T.J. Ford had 16 and Toronto beat Minnesota for the eighth straight time.

Andrea Bargnani had 12 and Jamario Moon added 11 for Toronto, which has won four straight at home.

Al Jefferson scored 23 points and Rashad McCants had 19 for the Timberwolves, who have lost eight of their past 10.

Hawks 123, Kings 117

At Atlanta, Mike Bibby had 24 points and 12 assists in his home debut for Atlanta against his former team.

Joe Johnson had 26 points to lead the Hawks.

Beno Udrih and Brad Miller each scored 25 points to lead Sacramento.

Nuggets 138, SuperSonics 96

At Seattle, Allen Iverson scored 31 points, and Denver scored the most points in the NBA this season to beat Seattle.

The Nuggets snapped a three-game losing streak, shooting 67.0—a franchise record. The previous best was nearly 30 years ago, when the Nuggets shot 66.7 percent against New Jersey early in the 1978 season. Denver also bettered the 66.2 percent shooting of the Lakers earlier this season, the previous best in the league.

The highest scoring game before Wednesday night came against Denver, when the Suns scored 137.

Kenyon Martin made 11 of 14 shots and scored 23 points, including a trio of dunks in the third quarter alone. Carmelo Anthony added 16 points and played just 30 minutes.

Mickael Gelabale scored 16 points for Seattle. Rookie Kevin Durant made just 4 of 17 attempts and scored 16 points.

Hornets 120, Suns 103

At New Orleans, Chris Paul had 25 points, 15 assists and three steals to help New Orleans end a three-game losing skid with a win over Phoenix.

David West scored 27 points and reserve guard Jannero Pargo 22 added for New Orleans, which shot 53 percent in avoiding its first four-game losing streak of the season.

The Suns continued to struggle since trading Shawn Marion for Shaquille O'Neal, but they couldn't blame their third loss in five games solely on the veteran 7-foot-1 center, who had 15 points and seven rebounds.

Hornets center Tyson Chandler broke out of a slump with 12 points and 15 rebounds.Amare Stoudemire led Phoenix with 32 points and 14 rebounds. Leandro Barbosa scored 17 points, hitting five 3-pointers, Raja Bell had 14 points and Steve Nash 13 assists.

Jazz 103, Pistons 95

At Salt Lake City, Mehmet Okur scored 11 of his 24 points in the fourth quarter and Utah rallied from a 15-point deficit to beat Detroit for the sixth straight time.

The Pistons went without a field goal for almost 12 minutes between the end of the third and midway through the fourth.

Paul Millsap scored 19, including 16 in the second half and led Utah's comeback. Carlos Boozer added 18 points and 15 rebounds and Deron Willliams had 14 points and 14 assists.

Trail Blazers 82, Clippers 80

At Los Angeles, Jarrett Jack tied a season high with 21 points, scoring 13 in the fourth quarter and leading Portland over Los Angeles.

Playing at Staples Center for the second straight night following their 96-83 loss to the Lakers, the Blazers blew a 14-point lead after squandering a 15-point advantage against the Lakers and a 17-point margin in Sunday's home loss to Boston.

Corey Maggette scored 32 points for the Clippers, but missed a potential go-ahead basket with 8 seconds remaining.

Mavs sign Magloire for help at center

DALLAS (AP)—The Dallas Mavericks signed free agent Jamaal Magloire to add depth at center that's been missing since DeSagana Diop went to New Jersey in the trade for Jason Kidd.

Magloire should be available for practice Wednesday and could play as early as Thursday when Dallas visits San Antonio.

"We were concerned about our backup center spot after the trade and this will provide us some much-needed depth," said Donnie Nelson, the president of basketball operations.

The 6-foot-11 center was waived by the Nets on Friday and cleared waivers Tuesday.

Magloire, 29, played less than 11 minutes per game this season with the Nets. In eight seasons, he's averaged 8.7 points and 7.3 rebounds. In 2005-06 in Milwaukee, his last season as a regular starter, he averaged 9.2 points and 9.5 rebounds.

Magloire will likely back up Erick Dampier.

Devin Harris could make Nets debut Thursday

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. (AP)—The run to the playoffs for the New Jersey Nets is set to go through Devin Harris.

The recently acquired point guard was given the job of directing the Nets' offense by coach Lawrence Frank on Wednesday after practicing for the first time since the Jason Kidd deal with Dallas last week.

"We really want him to take ownership with this," Frank said. "We want him to feel comfortable with this, be assertive and have the freedom to make some play calls."

How much Harris can help immediately is uncertain. He has not appeared in a game since spraining his left ankle while playing for the Mavericks on Jan. 27.

His availability against Milwaukee at the Izod Center on Thursday night will be a game-time decision. Indications after practice were that Harris would come off the bench and replace Marcus Williams if the ankle feels OK.

"Besides running up and down the court, I can pretty much do everything," said the third-year player who turned 25 on Wednesday. "The wind isn't there because I haven't played in a month. I have to get my stamina back up."

After watching for more than a week, Harris has a good feeling for the offense.

"I learn best when I can go through things at full speed and learn that way," said Harris, a talent who has a big upside being 10 years younger than Kidd. "I'm kind of hindered watching from the sidelines and trying to figure it out from there."

Frank knows there will be an adjustment period with Harris running the team. Kidd, who led the Nets to two NBA finals, had six years to get to know where and when Vince Carter and Richard Jefferson wanted the ball. Harris has had less than 10 days.

Frank believes in Harris, noting coaches and point guards have special relationships.

"Both sides have to be willing to take that leap of faith that there is some trust we're going to give each other, and the only way that trust grows is based on performance and preparation," Frank said. "Again, we'll each take a leap of faith and understand that this is a work in progress and we're going to start here."

Teammates liked Harris' quickness in practice, and his ability to drive and create off the dribble.

"I think that will be huge," forward Bostjan Nachbar said. "I have said this a million times before, I play off the others and he is one of the guys who creates stuff and I think I am going to benefit from it, just like the others."

Former Dallas teammate and fellow point guard Darrell Armstrong saw glimpses of Harris when he was with Dallas, where he averaged 14.4 points, 5.3 assists and just 2.4 turnovers in 39 games this season.

"I think he knows offense," Armstrong said. "He knows the offense probably better than any guy in the trade, and he is pretty fluid with it now. It looks like he is ready to go."

This is the longest Harris has been sidelined since missing 24 games with a leg injury two seasons ago.

"We haven't had a lot of time to get the trust factor going so we've had to take a leap of faith, both of us," Harris said of his relationship with Frank. "He's going to have to trust me and I am going to have to trust him. Hopefully, we'll have time to grow, but right now we are in a tense situation."

The Nets (25-32) are clinging to a playoff berth in the Eastern Conference with 25 games left in the regular season.

Congress mulls drugs law for pro sports

WASHINGTON (AP)—David Stern was not about to back down. Summoned again to Capitol Hill to discuss whether Congress should get into the business of legislating drug testing in the major professional sports leagues, the NBA commissioner took exception to lawmakers' remarks and stood up for his colleagues from the NFL, NHL and major league baseball.

"This is an area where federal legislation is not necessary," Stern told the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade and Consumer Protection.

As big as Wednesday's hearing was—it produced the rare sight of the four commissioners and their respective sports' union heads sitting at the same table—it was upstaged by news from another panel.

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform asked the Justice Department to investigate whether Roger Clemens lied under oath when he denied using steroids and human growth hormone at a Feb. 5 sworn deposition and at a Feb. 13 hearing.

Stern

There were no players at Wednesday's hearing. Instead, the commissioners sat side-by-side with their sport's union chiefs: Bud Selig was inches away from Donald Fehr; Stern was next to Billy Hunter. Then there was the NFL's Roger Goodell and Gene Upshaw, and the NHL's Gary Bettman and Paul Kelly.

All tried to persuade skeptical lawmakers that their respective leagues had taken steps to thwart steroids use and were anxiously awaiting a dependable way to detect human growth hormone, preferably through a urine test and not a blood test.

"In spite of the fact that they want to pronounce that they have it under control, I still think that it's not fully under control," said the subcommittee's chairman, Rep. Bobby Rush, D-Ill. "And we have to do more."

Baseball had the most to prove, having implemented a stringent steroids policy only in the last few years. The NFL began addressing the problem some two decades ago, while the NBA and NHL say the nature of their sports is such that steroids use is virtually nonexistent.

All four leagues have toughened their drugs policies since 2005, when many of the same witnesses—including Stern—testified before the same subcommittee. Several bills were introduced in the House and Senate after that session, but none came close to becoming law.

"Let's get it right this time. ... Let's go ahead and get something into law that is acceptable," Texas Republican Joe Barton said. "It's no fun having this hearing every two to three years."

That's when Stern interrupted, breaching protocol to point out the progress that has been made.

"The sports leagues HAVE gotten it right in the intervening three years," Stern said.

Rep. Marsha Blackburn was not fazed.

"Mr. Stern, I would suggest that we have not gotten it right enough," the Tennessee Republican said. "If we had gotten it right—if you all had gotten it right—we would not be here again today."

Blackburn said the leagues should be doing more to stem substance abuse at the grass roots level, and her comment to the witnesses that "you all have been very well coached" piqued Stern further.

"Enormous progress has been made," responded Stern, who then referred to the "voluminous, uncoached record" of material made available to the subcommittee.

"Things seem to be going in the right direction," Stern said in an interview during a break in the hearing. "If you read the statements of the leagues and listened to the testimony, that seems to be the case."

The commissioners and union heads generally agreed collective bargaining was the best way to address the drugs problem, rather than a one-size-fits-all law from Congress that would apply to all sports.

Rush differed on both counts. He said the subcommittee will continue to pursue some sort of legislation, but he was not specific.

"At the Olympics, they deal with a multitude of sports," Rush said. "And they seem to come up with a pretty good way of looking at the differences but also the similarities."

Rush opened the hearing with a message to "the elitists, the cynics and cultural critics" who say Congress should be spending its time on weightier matters rather than holding "a populist spectacle."

"I believe that we can move forward in a measured, deliberative and bipartisan manner with legislation that seriously tackles drugs in sports," Rush said.

Others politely disagreed.

"Sometimes I think we get our priorities out of order," Blackburn said.

Fehr suggested one way Congress could help sports leagues: require a chemical marker be placed in commercially sold HGH so that the substance would be detectable in a urine test.

Meanwhile, Selig said he has met with Fehr and a group of players to discuss implementing the recommendations of former Sen. George Mitchell's report on drug use in baseball. Selig said he hopes the "ongoing, detailed" talks produce a more independent, transparent and flexible drug testing program.

Rush said Mitchell was unable to attend Wednesday's hearing because he is receiving radiation treatment for cancer. The chairman also said he was "exceptionally and extremely disappointed" that World Wrestling Entertainment chairman Vince McMahon was the only witness to decline the subcommittee's invitation to testify.

"Today's hearing is not a trivial matter. ... Steroid abuse in professional wrestling is probably worse than in any professional sport or amateur sport," Rush said.

McMahon released a statement calling the comments about his absence "inaccurate and unfair." He said he notified the subcommittee a month ago he could not attend because his lawyer was representing another client at a trial in Pennsylvania.

A second witness panel included the CEOs of the U.S. Olympic Committee, the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency and the National Thoroughbred Racing Association, along with NCAA president Myles Brand.

Horse racing was of particular concern to Ed Whitfield, R-Ky., who blamed steroids in part for the frequent breakdowns of horses on the track.

"Is it time to call the federal cavalry and send it chasing into your stables with guns blazing to clean up the sport of horse racing?" Whitfield said.

National Thoroughbred Racing Association CEO Alexander Waldrop said a "model rule" for steroids testing has been adopted in many horse racing states and that it is hoped that all states will adopt it by the end of 2008.

"If they don't step up," Waldrop said, "then it is incumbent upon the federal government to step up."

Panthers cut Carr, sign Muhammad

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP)—The Carolina Panthers cut ties with disappointing quarterback David Carr on Wednesday and brought back an old favorite, receiver Muhsin Muhammad.

Carr was released a year after he signed a $6 million, two-year deal with the Panthers following a five-year stint as a starter in Houston. But Carr struggled so much when he took over for the injured Jake Delhomme last season that he was eventually demoted to third-string.

Carr leaves Carolina as Muhammad prepares for his second stint with the franchise, a week after he was released by the Chicago Bears. Agent Joel Segal said Muhammad signed a two-year deal, but declined to reveal financial figures.

Muhammad was the Panthers' second-round pick in 1996 and spent nine seasons with Carolina before being released in a salary-cap move. The Panthers struggled to replace him, leaving star receiver Steve Smith to face constant double-teams over the past few seasons.

"I did talk to Steve and he felt like he needs another complement on the other side of him," Muhammad said at a news conference. "He kind of coerced me into coming back. He welcomed me back with open arms. ... We're excited about playing again with each other. We've always maintained our friendship outside of football."

It's unclear what role Muhammad will have in his return to Carolina. He turns 35 in May and had 40 catches last season.

The Panthers hope Dwayne Jarrett, who had a disappointing rookie season, will develop into the No. 2 receiver. Drew Carter and Keary Colbert may not be re-signed after struggling while splitting the starts last season opposite Smith.

But Muhammad remains one of the league's top blocking receivers.

"If I'm the No. 3 receiver, they're going to have a real good No. 3 receiver on the field," said Muhammad, who is 64 yards shy of 10,000 yards receiving in his career.

Carr's release is no surprise. The No. 1 overall pick in the 2002 draft, he was thought to be a significant upgrade over Chris Weinke as Carolina's No. 2 QB. But Carr had a disastrous season after he took over as the starter in Week 3, when Delhomme had a season-ending right elbow injury.

Looking tentative in the pocket, Carr lacked accuracy and then was sidelined with a back injury and two concussions. But even when Carr got healthy again, the Panthers used 44-year-old Vinny Testaverde and undrafted rookie Matt Moore ahead of him.

Carr finished with three touchdown passes, five interceptions and a passer rating of 58.3 before being released for the second time in as many years. The move clears more than $2 million in salary-cap space.

"He did everything we asked, but unfortunately it didn't work out like anyone had hoped or expected," general manager Marty Hurney said. "David is an excellent person and we wish him the best."

Moore and Brett Basanez, who missed all of last season with a wrist injury, are expected to contend for the backup job next season.

Muhammad is expected to catch passes from Delhomme, who is working his way back from reconstructive surgery. Delhomme's top two targets were Smith and Muhammad during Carolina's only trip to the Super Bowl in the 2003 season.

Muhammad, who maintained a home and business interests in Charlotte after his release three years ago, holds the team record for catches (578), yards receiving (7,751) and touchdown catches (44).

His 102 receptions in the 2000 season were a team record until Smith had 103 in 2005.

Saying he's motivated to win a championship for Charlotte, Muhammad was eager to get to work. He already worked out a deal with tight end Jeff King to wear No. 87 again.

"Everybody is extremely excited that he's back," Hurney said. "He brings an attitude. He brings a work ethic. He was somebody that was extremely highly regarded when he was here. It was a sad day when he left and it's a happy day now that he's back."

Yap returns, but league still feels his suspension

MANILA, Philippines—James Yap returned to action and came up with a statement game that made the message clear to Sta Lucia Realty: This time, if the Realtors want to mess around with Purefoods, they'd have to go through him first.

Urged by his coach to channel his frustration over his suspension to the court, Yap scored 20 points in the fourth quarter Wednesday night to lead the Tender Juicy Giants to an 89-81 decision of Sta. Lucia that forged a deciding seventh game for the Smart PBA Philippine Cup at the Araneta Coliseum.

"This game was special because there was no tomorrow had we lost," Yap said in Filipino. "Now we have a chance to win the series."

Outside the lines of the hardwood floor he torched en route to 30 markers, the league was forced to deal with the repercussions of his suspension.

The league's technical head went on a leave of absence reportedly after voicing his disagreement over Yap's suspension, a knowledgeable source told the Philippine Daily Inquirer Wednesday night. Also, a television spokesperson confirmed that San Miguel Corp. was pulling out its advertisements on television and in-house in an apparent protest over the suspension.

"We wanted to survive against all odds and that's what we did tonight," Gregorio said, a tinge of anger very evident in his voice. "It's just great to have your MVP on the floor when it's survival time.

"Deep in my heart, I believe we shouldn't have lost James in Game 5."

Perry Martinez, the league's technical chief, did not approve of the suspension and went on a leave of absence after voicing his disagreement, reportedly because of health reasons.

The source, who talked on condition of anonymity, bared that Martinez and commissioner Renauld "Sonny" Barrios disagreed on suspending Yap, with Martinez citing a memo signed by ex-commissioner Noli Eala as the reason.

According to the source, Martinez pointed out that Eala had circulated a new rule more than a year ago dismissing "judgment calls" as mistakes of referees which cannot be reversed in any way, especially after the game in question has ended.

Martinez "signed to upgrade Yap's foul from Flagrant 1 to Flagrant 2," but said that the player cannot be suspended since the league would be "reversing a judgment call."

Yap hit five triples in the fourth period, the last proving to be the blade that slit the Realtors' collective throats with just over three minutes left as it shoved the Giants ahead, 79-70.

Interviewed by the Inquirer, Barrios refused to comment pending the completion of the series. A board meeting is scheduled on Thursday and the controversy is expected to be on tabs.

Martinez, on the other hand, did not answer phone calls or text messages.

Purefoods 89 – J. Yap 30, Pingris 19, Salvador 10, Raymundo 9, Yap 6, Adducul 5, Simon 4, Lanete 3, Castillo 3.

Sta. Lucia 81 – Espino 22, Mendoza 14, Reyes 11, Daa 9, Williams 9, Yeo 8, Miranda 5, Aquino 2, Gonzales 1, Omolon 0.

Quarters: 22-15, 40-30, 57-59, 89-81. ***(PDI)***

BIG

From Page 44

MVA and Taga Inc. would stage the Saipan Sportsfest two weeks later so that the XTERRA Global Tour would create a sort of mini XTERRA Championship series in the Pacific.

"There's a conflict this year as well with our Winter World Championship in Utah. We'd like to see this go back the week before Australia (a week or two before Lent), so we could have people to come here and Australia and make a South Pacific kind of series. We could actually even tie in with New Zealand. We could tie in Australia, Saipan, and maybe the organizers could get together and come up with some sort of a championship series for all," he said.

The 6th XTERRA Saipan Championship is a unique challenge that kicks off on March 8.

The race starts with a 1.5-kilometer swim in the warm and clear waters off Micro Beach. The swim is followed by a 30-km mountain bike ride that winds through the island terrain and to the top of Mount Tapochao—towering 1,545 feet above sea level and is the highest point on the island.

The off-road triathlon concludes with a 12-km trail run that takes athletes through secret jungles and caves.

The entry fees for the XTERRA Saipan Championship is $125 for an individual or $250 for a team plus a $9 one day USA Triathlon license if you are not a member.

For XTERRA Sport, the entry fee is $75 for an individual and $150 for a team plus the $9 fee, if applicable.

The divisions that can be participate in are 15-19, 20-24, 25-29. 30-34, 35-39, 40-45, 45-49, 50-54, 55-59, 60-and-over (women), 60-64 (men), 65-and-over (men), professional, military, and challenged athlete. Teams may be men, women, co-ed, military, and challenged athlete.

LIZAMA

From Page 44

innings in relief coming in the top of the seventh to replace Palacios. He gave up three runs, one earned, on two hits with one strikeout and two walks.

Third baseman Toi Celis went 2-for-3 with one run, two doubles, and an RBI. Manny Sablan went 2-for-4 with one double. Iguel, 1-for-2, scored one run and had one RBI, while the speedy Omar went 2-for-5 and had two stolen bases putting himself in a better position in scoring two runs.

Sakisat pitched in no relief and was tagged with 12 hits with three strikeouts and one walk.

The Rock Steady bullpen held the Rangers to a combined 5-for-35 in batting with Jess Iguel, Ed Kapileo, J.J. Laniyo, Craig Sanchez, and Guerrero having a hit each.

Action in the Budweiser-SML continues tonight with the Korean Dreams of manager Park Sang Do taking on Jay Han's Komoro at 6:30pm, while on Monday the D9ers debut against Kabur.

FIESTA

From Page 44

Opone, after being held to two points in the first half, scored 11 points in the second half to help Fiesta-Grand rally back from several nine-point deficits in the third quarter. His consistent shooting also kept World Resort at bay.

Opone finished with 13 points, nine rebounds, six assists, and one steal. Esdrelon also had 10 rebounds, three assists, and six steals.

Noel David added 11 points also for Fiesta-Grand.

Jerryfel Mangahis paced World Resort with 25 points, five rebounds, and four assists, while backcourt mate Dennis Vinas had 22 points, three rebounds, five assists, and five steals before fouling out in the final two minutes of the game.

James Wabinga and Jam Navarro combined for 23 points, nine rebounds, and four assists, while Schneider Lanzo only had five points but grabbed a team-high nine rebounds against Fiesta-Grand's big men.

In the second game, Hyatt took Hafadai center Marlon Bamba out of his comfort zone to breeze to a 103-83 victory.

Hyatt ganged up Bamba whenever he received the ball inside the shaded area, at times double-teaming the Hafadai workhorse to force him to commit a turnover or kick out the ball.

Bamba fell into early foul trouble picking up his third with still four minutes left in the first quarter. Steven Tenorio sacrificed his body to force Bamba's third foul, establishing his position against a charging Bamba to draw the charge.

Hafadai was within striking distance when Bamba was pulled out of the game and only trailed Hyatt by six, 9-15. With Bamba gone, Hyatt went on a closing 14-4 exchange with Tenorio's triple touching off that scoring binge.

Bamba was inserted in the second quarter and barely two minutes gone was whistled for his fourth foul, his third offensive foul, this time Mike Umali drawed the charge with 7:59 to go.

From there it was an all Hyatt show as Bamba rode the bench for most of the match and when he came back in the third quarter, Hyatt was already up by 24 points.

Edmark Mendoza led Hyatt with 25 points and five rebounds, while Bernard Aquino had 19 markers, five rebounds, six assists, and two steals.

Tenorio had his first double-double of the season, finishing with 16 points and 11 rebounds to go with his four assists, while Umali added 16 markers, four rebounds, three assists, and two steals.

Bamba had his sixth career double-double game with 27 points and 12 rebounds, but those numbers were not enough to lift Hafadai to victory. He also had two steals and two shot blocks.

Peter Iguel added 23 points, seven rebounds, two assists, and one steal, while Remar Mendoza and Mike Olaitiman combined for 23 points, five rebounds, five assists, and three steals.

Titans Chivas Life, Pacific Telecom, Inc., Coca-Cola Bottlers Micronesia, and Western Sales Trading Company are the sponsors of the 2007-2008 season of the HANMI Cup.

HANMI Cup coordinator Lito Espino is also extending his appreciation to all hotels and business establishments that donated money to the family of the late Rick Alegre, who is a former CNMI national player and captain of Aqua Resort.

Espino said Alegre's family and friends also extend their appreciation to Aqua Resort Club general manager Hiro Sugie, who attended Alegre's rosary everyday at the Commonwealth Health Center chapel.

First Game

Fiesta-Grand Hotel 110 – Sanciangco 40, Esdrelon 29, Opone 13, David 11, Jinang 11, Manglona 4, Dela Torre 2.

Saipan World Resort 96 – Mangahis 26, Vinas 22, Wabinga 13, Navarro 10, Hamoy 9, Caruana 5, Lanzo 5, Aguon 3, Ramos 2, Redita 2.

Scoring by quarters: 20-20, 42-48, 70-62, 110-96.

Referees: Eric Artillaga and Arnold Mesa.

Second Game

Hyatt Regency Saipan 103 – Mendoza 25, Aquino 19, Tenorio 16, Umali 16, Abaya 8, Vargas 8, Dillay 7, Arreza 4.

Hafadai Beach Hotel 83 – Bamba 27, Iguel 23, Mendoza 12, Olaitiman 11,Bacolod 7, Calayag 2, Guinto 1.

Referees: Eric Artillaga and Gilbert Espinosa.

TINIAN

From Page 44

fauros is the vice president. Former Rota Little League president Chris Ogo is the secretary, while the treasurer is former Rota councilman Kevin Atalig and Donna Ogo is the player agent.

Ada said he is extending his congratulations to the newly elected Little League board of directors of Tinian and Rota. "I admire all of them for taking the initiative to volunteer their time and effort to help organize their respective leagues."

While they have completed organizing Tinian's charter in the Little League, Ada said they are still in the process of doing all the paperwork for the 2008 plan of action for Saipan's next-door neighbor.

The Tinian Little League season is set to open by the first or second week of March and they are eyeing to have four to five teams in the Majors division and two each in the Junior and Senior leagues.

Rota, meanwhile, is in the process of getting re-organized and is completing their documents that will be submitted in order to be chartered under the Little League program in South Williamsport, Pennsylvania.

The Rota Little League season is tentatively set to open on March 16 and Ada said he would grace the opening ceremony. He would also bring one umpire and statistician to conduct separate clinics on March 13 and 14.

Five teams will be competing in the Majors division, while they are still in the process of forming squads in the Junior and Senior leagues.

Ada said Rota will also host the 2008 CNMI district tournament slated in the first or second week of June. "Once I already have and studied all the schedule of games of the Saipan, Tinian, and Rota Little Leagues, I would set a date for the district tournament."

Ayuyu and the Rota Little League board is also coordinating with Ada to organize the district tournament.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	44	12	.786	–
Toronto	32	24	.571	12
Philadelphia	26	32	.448	19
New Jersey	25	32	.439	19 1/2
New York	18	39	.316	26 1/2

Southeast Division

Orlando	37	23	.617	–
Washington	27	30	.474	8 1/2
Atlanta	23	32	.418	11 1/2
Charlotte	19	38	.333	16 1/2
Miami	10	44	.185	24

Central Division

Detroit	42	16	.724	–
Cleveland	32	26	.552	10
Chicago	23	34	.404	18 1/2
Milwaukee	22	35	.386	19 1/2
Indiana	22	36	.379	20

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

San Antonio	38	17	.691	–
New Orleans	38	18	.679	1/2
Dallas	38	19	.667	1
Houston	37	20	.649	2
Memphis	14	43	.246	25

Northwest Division

Utah	37	21	.638	–
Denver	34	23	.596	2 1/2
Portland	30	28	.517	7
Seattle	15	42	.263	21 1/2
Minnesota	12	44	.214	24

Pacific Division

L.A. Lakers	40	17	.702	–
Phoenix	39	19	.672	1 1/2
Golden State	34	22	.607	5 1/2
Sacramento	26	31	.456	14
L.A. Clippers	19	36	.345	20

Yesterday's Games

Chicago 113, Indiana 107
Atlanta 123, Sacramento 117
Philadelphia 101, Orlando 89
Toronto 107, Minnesota 85
Boston 92, Cleveland 87
New York 113, Charlotte 89
New Orleans 120, Phoenix 103
Utah 103, Detroit 95
Denver 138, Seattle 96
Portland 82, L.A. Clippers 80

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOCAL SCORES

HANMI Cup Standings

Fiesta-Grand Hotel	8	1
Aqua Resort Club	6	2
Hyatt Regency Saipan	6	3
Pacific Islands Club	4	2
Hafadai Beach Hotel	3	5
Saipan World Resort	2	7
Aquarius Beach Tower	0	7

Budweiser-SML Standings

Tanapag Falcons	1	0
Rock Steady	1	0
Tigers	0	1
Ford Rangers	0	1
Korean Dreams	0	0
Komoro	0	0
D9ers	0	0
Kabur	0	0

NMIVA Indoor Standings

Men's Division

	W	L	PF	PA	SW
Menudo	10	2	757	606	29
No Fear	8	3	686	620	20
Fanians	7	4	663	602	21
Ol'Aces	7	4	648	640	18
Home Boyz	6	6	681	706	18
Islanders	6	6	689	698	17
CH-Hammer	5	7	698	693	16
Beach Jammers	2	9	596	683	9
Ma Numel'u	1	11	600	768	7

Women's Division

Pikan Gaga	9	0	565	469	19
YoYo's	5	4	548	508	15
Seikid	4	5	507	522	14
Beach Jammers	3	6	500	558	10
Ta Chagi	1	7	402	474	8

PF-Points scored by team
PA-Points scored against team
SW-Sets won

Baxter, Dalhausser enjoy Saipan sortie

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Paul Baxter and Phil Dalhausser certainly have become household names here in the CNMI after both U.S. beach volleyball pros added Saipan as their regular pit stop at the start of the year.

Baxter and Dalhausser again graced the 16th edition of the Marianas Cup Beach Volleyball Festival at the Pacific Islands Club over the weekend as they continued to dominate the exhibition match among professional spikers in the annual competition.

The Baxter-Dalhausser tandem have been victorious in their past three team-ups as they claimed Japan's Shinya Hata and new partner Yoshiumi Hasegawa as their last victims.

In 2004, Baxter teamed up with Steven Wong to beat another Japanese pair to bring his record to 5-0 in the annual exhibition match. He also won the Marianas Cup tournament with his 2004 partner Richard Steele when they foiled the title defense of Daisuke Matsumoto and Shigekazu Fujimatsu, 21-13, in the finals.

Baxter said this was one of the toughest Marianas Cup competitions he had been in since 2004. "A lot of good players joined the tournament and this just shows that the level of competition and beach volleyball is growing here on Saipan."

Baxter said he would definitely return next year to defend their title and he will have no problem in 2009 since aside from splitting the $3,800 top purse with Steele, he also won an all-expenses paid trip back to Saipan and free stay at PIC in 2009.

JON PEREZ
Paul Baxter, left, and Phil Dalhausser strike a pose after their game in the Marianas Cup Beach Volleyball tournament last weekend at the Pacific Islands Club sand courts.

Steele has nothing but praises for his partner. "Paul [Baxter] is one of the best beach volleyball players and he keeps me on my toes inside the court. He is all business on the court and gives me a lot of good advice."

He said that he allowed his partner to play his game while he made it a point to commit less errors and just to be sure where to place his serves.

Dalhausser, who first competed in 2005, was glad to be back for the third time on the island. He missed last year's event to concentrate more in the AVP Tour with regular partner Todd Rogers.

Dalhausser said one reason that he missed last year's tournament was that he and Rogers played an exhibition match against Brazil at Copa Cabana Beach in Rio de Janeiro. Brazil won the exhibition match.

"I was a bit rusty then but now I am more focused and relaxed with my game," said Dalhausser after he won for the third time in the exhibition match in the Marianas Cup with Baxter against the Japanese pros.

He said he has grown to love the island ever since he first came in 2005. "I love Saipan, the people are great, the weather is nice, and [Jon] Cramer is my friend."

"Coming here for the Marianas Cup is also my way of spending three days of fun and relaxation. I usually get away for the weekend to recharge so I could play much better on the Tour."

After the Marianas Cup, Dalhausser will reunite with Rogers for a World Tour in Australia, which is one of the qualifying events for the 2008 Beijing Olympics in August.

"We are hoping to qualify and hopefully we can represent the U.S. in Beijing," said Dalhausser, who would qualify for the first time in the Olympics if given the chance.

He said in order to qualify for Beijing they must have played eight best finishes in tournaments in 2007 and half of 2008 including the one in Australia.

No Fear on six-game winning streak

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

No Fear quietly crept its way up to second place in the men's division standings of the Indoor Volleyball Winter League trailing Menudo by 1 1/2 games as the 2008 season enters the last five days of competition.

No Fear is slowly gaining momentum in the league coming back from a set down to score a 21-25, 25-20, 15-9 triumph over Beach Jammers last Tuesday night at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

The win was the sixth straight for No Fear, hiking their record to 8-3, while the Jammers dropped to a 2-9 mark to remain in eighth place.

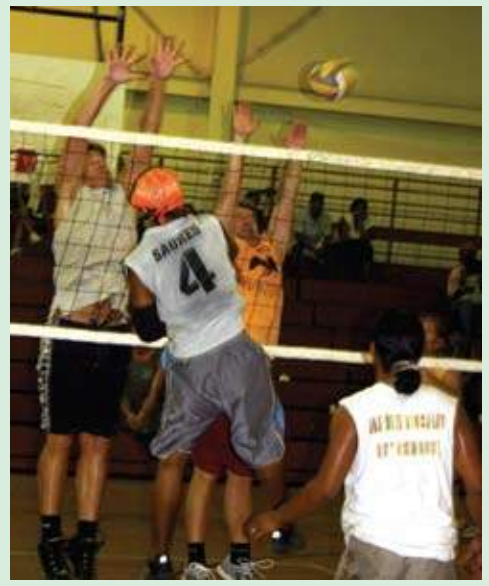
No Fear's last loss was on Jan. 31, 2008, when they suffered a 27-25, 21-25, 11-15 setback against Ol'Aces.

Menudo continues to lead the standings with a league-best 10-2 mark followed by No Fear's 8-3 slate. Fanians and Ol'Aces are tied with similar 7-4 records the same thing with the 6-6 cards of Home Boyz and Islanders.

CH-Hammer, 5-7, Beach Jammers, 2-9, and Ma Numel'u, 1-11, complete the standings.

Menudo, meanwhile, survived an opening set loss to escape with an 18-25, 28-26, 15-9 win against the hard-fighting Islanders.

After a seesaw battle at the start of the first set, the Islanders went on an 11-2 exchange to enjoy a 21-13 lead against the stunned Menudo.



JON PEREZ
The Islanders' Jeronimo Saures beats the two-man block of Menudo's Bruce Berline and Rob Epley in their game in the men's division of the 2008 Indoor Volleyball Winter League last Tuesday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Unable to penetrate Menudo's brick-wall defense at the net, the Islanders changed their tactics midway in the match and instead of going for kills and spikes opted for high-arching drop shots to trick their opponents.

The Islanders' ploy was so effective that Bozu Taisacan scored their 22nd point when he evaded the two-man block of Tyce Mister and Dale Roberts at the net. They went on to score the next three points to close out the set, 25-18.

Both teams tried to outsmart each other in the second frame with Menudo gaining the upperhand in the latter stages of the set to tie the game at 1-1.

That was when Menudo's veteran smarts and nerves of steel came through as they outlasted the Islanders to escape with the win.

In other games, Home Boyz swept Ma Numel'u, 25-21, 25-23, 15-12, while Fanians brushed aside CH-Hammer, 25-18, 25-18, 15-12.

In the women's division, Pikan Gaga won its ninth straight game after a 25-13, 25-27, 15-11 win over Beach Jammers, while YoYo's blanked Seikid, 25-17, 25-17, 15-4.

YoYo's remain in second place with a 5-4 mark followed by Seikdi's 4-5 record. Beach Jammers dropped to 3-6 while Ta Chagi, which had a bye, is at the cellar with a 1-7 card.

Games in the men's and women's division are being played at press time and results were not yet available as of this writing.

Invitational meet, ocean swim lures 6 teams

By JON PEREZ
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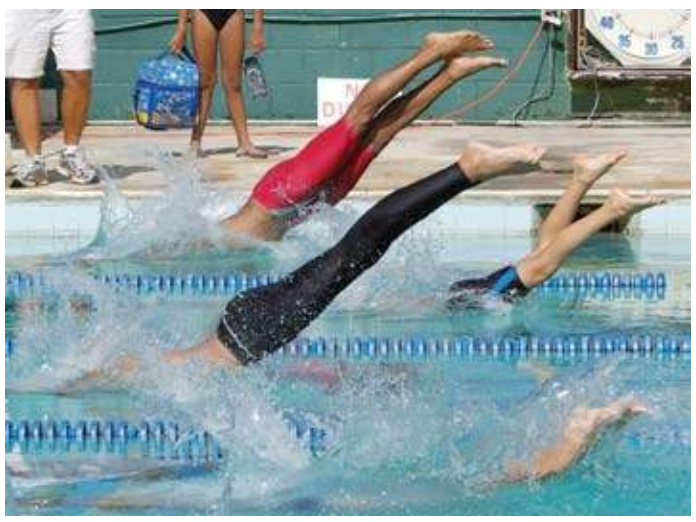
REPORTER

Six swimming clubs from host Saipan and Guam will be competing in the 2008 International Invitational Meet and 30th Annual Saipan Ocean Swim over the weekend.

The competing swim clubs are the Saipan Swim Club and Swimming Center Tsunami Saipan of the hosts, and Guam's Tarakito Swim Team, Guam Typhoons, Manukai Athletic Club, and Tsunami Guam.

The swim events begin today with the international meet at 3:30pm at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool in Marpi and ends at 6pm. Competition will be from 8am to 11am on Saturday and resumes from 1:15pm to 3pm.

Competitions will be held in six age divisions. The following age divisions are 8-and-under, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14, 15-18, and Over-19. Several masters events are also lined up in the following age groups: 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, and 60-69.



DAN KIMBALL
Six swimming clubs from host Saipan and Guam will take the plunge starting this afternoon with the two-day 2008 International Invitational Meet and Sunday's 30th Annual Saipan Ocean Swim.

The age on the first day of competition will be the basis for a swimmer's eligibility in all categories. A total of 79 events will be played in all age divisions.

The Top 3 individual point scorers in each age group will be given trophies, while the fourth to eighth placers will get ribbons. Team trophies will be awarded to the Top 3 squads in combined scoring, while relay awards are for the Top 3 teams only.

SSC head coach and meet director Michael Stewart is advising all swimming teams to stay at the Marianas Resort and Spa since it is within only a five-minute walk off the Marpi pool.

Stewart said he is expecting that at least 75 percent of the lifetime bests of his SSC swimmers will improve during the international meet. All SSC senior, junior, and blue squads will be competing in the two tournaments.

The 30th Annual Saipan Ocean Swim, meanwhile, will take place on Sunday at 8am at the beach of the Saipan World Resort. The course is in the Saipan Lagoon around two World War II tanks.

The 8-and-under division (800 meters) will start the race at 8am followed by the 9-10 age group (1 kilometer) five minutes after. At 8:40am the 2.5K swimmers will take the stating line and will be followed by the 1.3K participants 10 minutes after.

Club Championship replaces Turkey Shoot in promotion

In an effort to keep the Turkey Shoot a fund-raising event, the Refaluwasch Golf Association decided to award members who take part in at least 10 rounds this year free entry to the yearend 2008 Club Championship.

RGA president "emeritus" and current tournament director Jess Wabol said after careful consideration, officers of the golf club had a change of heart and opted to keep the November affair—Turkey Shoot—a fundraising event.

In other news, RGA will hold the qualifier for its March Ace of the Month Tournament tomorrow, March 1, at the Coral Ocean Point Golf Resort.

Check-in time for the competition is 11am with tee off set an hour later at 12pm.

Entry fee is $30 with greens fees at $20. The tournament can accommodate as much as 16 members.

Wabol reminded the public that that the club has halved its membership dues for 2008 from the long-standing fee of $50 to only $25.

Wabol said this happened after RGA recognized the hard economic times and decided to give its members and future members a break by slashing the cost of becoming part of RGA.

He said he hopes by making membership in RGA a little lighter in the pocket, more weekend warriors will now return to the golf links and renew their membership or apply as new members of the golf club.

For more information about RGA's upcoming March Ace of the Month Tournament qualifier, new membership policies, and other competitions held by the club, contact president Adam Hardwicke at 483-2926 or Wabol at 233-3673. ***(Mark Rabago)***

Baxter, Dalhausser enjoy Saipan sortie

Paul Baxter and Phil Dalhausser certainly have become household names here in the CNMI after both U.S. beach volleyball pros added Saipan as their regular pit stop at the start of the year.

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Saipan Tribune
Sports

Clemens declines to comment on DOJ probe

Roger Clemens declined to say whether he was aware Congress had asked the Justice Department to investigate whether he lied in sworn testimony about steroid use.

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'Big Kahuna' is back on Saipan

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

The big boss, rather the Big Kahuna, of the XTERRA Global Tour is back on Saipan and Dave Nicholas is happy the organization that took over the staging of this year's 6th XTERRA Saipan Championship is doing a great job.

"The organization seems to be going along well and what we're here for is to just make sure that all the people now responsible understand what they have to do to make the race run smoothly," said the managing director of the XTERRA Global Tour.

Nicholas arrived on Saipan at 2am yesterday morning, together with XTERRA Global Tour support services manager Tyson Pualoa and longtime Saipan resident Wilhem "Bill" Sakovich, who will serve as this year's course director.

"We've worked with this folks in the past but it was our crew that had the responsibility to mark the course, make sure the ambulance was out, make sure the water was there, make sure that if there's any emergencies they're handled. We will not be here this year, but what we felt and the deal that we made with MVA (Marianas Visitors Authority) and the people of Saipan is we'll have two experienced people come here and actually work hands on with the people who are going to do it during the race, so they will know what to do," added Nicholas.

MARK RABAGO
XTERRA Global Tour managing director Dave "Big Kahuna" Nicholas, right, and support services manager Tyson Pualoa pose with the 2008 XTERRA Saipan Championship poster after meeting with organizers of this year's race yesterday at the Marianas Visitors Authority conference room.

The Big Kahuna said he and Pualoa will be pretty much busy the next three days making sure the course for the XTERRA Saipan Championship, long considered the crown jewel of the XTERRA Global Tour, will be up and ready.

"We will work all day Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. We'll have several days to get things accomplished. Plus we will pre-mark the course as well to make sure that there's no mistakes. We heard that the stakes and ropes are down. We don't know what kind of person would do that. It's silly why they would go to the jungle and take the stakes out. It's crazy. But we'll cover 100 percent of the course and make sure that everything would be the way it should be," he said.

Nicholas said his and Pualoa's sidetrip to Saipan actually is the envy of the Team Unlimited staff.

"The rest of the staff in Hawaii are jealous. We're happy to be back and the other guys from Team Unlimited wished they were back here too," he said.

Nicholas said he wished

See BIG on Page 42

Tinian, Rota Little Leagues begin in March

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

It will be Tinian and Rota's turn to open up their respective Little League seasons as they prepare for the CNMI District tournament in June this year, which will be hosted by the Commonwealth's northernmost island.

CNMI district administrator and international board director James Ada, in an interview, said that he is now working closely with the respective board of directors of Tinian and Rota to organize their leagues.

Ada said Tinian has been chartered to become members again of the Little League for 2008, while they are still processing the documents for Rota.

Ike Aquiningoc will serve his fifth year as Tinian Little League president with Frank Dela Cruz Jr. as his vice president. Elected secretary-treasurer is Kim Hinds, while Kian John San Nicolas will be the 2008 safety officer.

Jun Sanchez (player agent), Joe Kiyoshi (umpire representative), and Keith Nabors (manager and coaches representative) will join them in the board.

In the Rota Little League, 2003 regional tournament overall director John Ayuyu is the new president, while Joe Char-

See TINIAN on Page 42

Fiesta-Grand and Hyatt cruise past foes

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

League-leading Fiesta-Grand Hotel and Hyatt Regency Saipan cruised past their opponents as second round action in the 2nd Annual HANMI Cup Inter-Hotel Basketball League continued last Wednesday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Fiesta-Grand streaked to its eight straight win after a 110-96 victory over upset-conscious Saipan World Resort, while Hyatt slammed the Marlon Bamba-led Hafadai Beach Hotel, 103-83.

It was the eighth win in nine games for Fiesta-Grand and they continued to lead the seven-team field while handing World Resort its seventh loss against two wins.

Ryan Sanciangco and Elmer Esdrelon continued to pace the Fiesta-Grand offense but this time they had plenty of help from William Opone, who joined in the scoring fray.

Sanciangco and Esdrelon ended up with their usual numbers of 40 and 29 points, respectively, but it was Opone's second-half exploits that made the difference for Fiesta-Grand.

See FIESTA on Page 42

JON PEREZ
Hyatt Regency Saipan's Bernard Aquino, left, tries to score against Hafadai Beach Hotel's Marlon Bamba in their game in the 2nd Annual HANMI Cup Inter-Hotel Basketball League Wednesday night at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymansum.

Lizama single lifts Rock Steady past Rangers

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Dane Lizama singled in the game-winning run to help Rock Steady squeeze out a 5-4 win over the Ford Rangers in Wednesday's game in the 3rd Annual Budweiser-Saipan Major League at the Francisco M. Palacios Baseball Field.

Rock Steady was trailing 3-4 heading into the bottom of the ninth inning when pinch runner Erik Lizama tied the game when he reached home plate on a Luis Iguel single. Lizama came in to pinch run for Ed Manibusan, who got on base on a Ray Guerrero error.

Iguel moved to second on a bunt by Oliver Secharmidal, who failed to beat the tag on a 2-3-putout play. Iguel moved to third on a Tyrone Omar line drive and scored after Lizama's single to end the game.

The Rangers entered the bottom of the ninth with a one-run lead when Jess Iguel scored on a passed ball.

Rangers pitcher Mel Sakisat and the Ford crew only needed three outs to end the match, but the breaks of the game did not go their way as they blew their chances and failed to start the season with a win.

Ton Palacios started on the mound for Rock Steady pitching for six innings—including five shutout innings—allowing the Rangers to one run on three hits with three strikeouts and three walks.

Shane Yamada pitched three

See LIZAMA on Page 42

JON PEREZ
Rock Steady's Luis Iguel runs toward third base as Ford Rangers third baseman Pete Tomokane looks on in their game in the 3rd Annual Budweiser-Saipan Major League last Wednesday night at the Francisco M. Palacios Baseball Field.